

THE ECONOMICS  
OF  
SOVIET AGRICULTURE

BY  
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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

RUSSIA is still an agricultural country in spite of the enormous industrial achievements of the Bolsheviks. Possibly the prosperity of the nation is not so dependent on the harvest as it was in pre-War times, but good and bad harvests still make a difference to the urban and industrial population as well as to the agricultural population. As the production of industrial consumers' goods expands, the importance of the rural market will increase, and therefore it is to the interest of the whole people that the productive capacity and the purchasing power of the agricultural population should increase *pari passu* with the expansion of industry. The old Bolsheviks, although they concerned themselves primarily with emancipation of the industrial proletariat, realised that the unscientific and primitive methods of the independent peasant farmer were incompatible with a prosperous socialist State; both the industrial workers and the agricultural workers must advance together. The general lines on which industry should be organised in the socialist State have now been fixed. In agriculture the Collective Farm has been adopted as the standard form of farm enterprise, but so far it has not proved an unqualified success. The fact that even now, ten years after the decision to base agriculture on the collective farm, it is necessary to legislate against excessive private

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enterprise among the collectivised peasants\* shows that the principle of collectivisation has not met with the entire approval of the peasants. In the following pages I have tried to set out as impartially and objectively as possible the advantages and disadvantages of collectivisation from the peasants' point of view. It seems probable that further amendments will have to be made in the system before its final form is fixed.

\* See Appendix III.

L. E. H.

*June 1939.*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

FOR various reasons the effect of the Bolshevik revolution on the life of the Russian peasant has received less attention than its effect on the industrial workers. The revolution was, of course, frankly a proletarian movement led by a small body of men belonging to the intelligentsia. A few only of the leaders had ever earned their living by manual toil and one or two at most were of peasant origin; that is to say, had any connection with the ancestral village. Among the numerous revolutionary groups existing in Russia during the second half of last century, those who believed in the peasant and aspired to better his condition were typified by the so-called *Narodniki* or Populists, while the Social Democrats, followers of Marx, devoted themselves to the cause of the proletarian worker. Eventually the Narodniki became closely allied with the Social Democrats, largely because the peasants were a barren field for political propaganda; not that they were in principle antipathetic to revolution, but they were incapable of co-operating for an abstract ideal, being intent on the concrete and practical question of securing more land. Thus when the revolution was realised it was the Bolsheviks who gained the support of the peasants by adopting the Social Revolutionary programme of expropriating the landowners in favour of the peasants.

While the peasants were enthusiastically seizing the land the Bolsheviks were nationalising industrial enterprises, which in theory became the property of the workers. But there was a fundamental difference between the two proceedings : the land was divided up among the peasants and added to their personal holdings, while the factories became collective property in accordance with orthodox Marxian theory. In practice the industrial worker's position was little altered, and after the short-lived and confused experiment of War Communism he found himself the same wage-earner that he had been before, with no more effective control over his hours of work, his remuneration or over the running of his enterprise. Foreign socialist intellectuals, seeing in the Bolshevik revolution the dawn of a new civilisation, seem to have been satisfied by the elimination of private ownership of industrial capital without making serious and objective attempts to analyse the effect on the workers. It was sufficient that the results of their toil were devoted to the good of the community at large instead of to paying profits to private owners. But the peasant remained an incorrigible individualist, showing no inclination to toil for the common good. With incredible ingratitude he energetically and not infrequently violently objected to handing his crops over to the Government without any return. He was therefore accused of being a petty-bourgeois capitalist and all the misfortunes that befell him were the deserved reward of his intransigence.

The tendency of practically all socialist interpreters and exponents of the Soviet system is to

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treat the revolution almost entirely as an undertaking to improve the conditions and status of the proletarian working class alone, which, of course, was in principle true, seeing that the peasant must become a proletarian land worker in order to share in the benefits provided for the Soviet toilers. The result is that most uninformed foreign opinion thinks of Soviet communism almost entirely in terms of factories, workers' clubs and urban institutions and amenities, and is comparatively ignorant of and indifferent to the conditions obtaining in the villages. But about 70 per cent of the population of Russia is still dependent on the land for its livelihood. Therefore a study of conditions among the industrial working class gives a most imperfect and partial understanding of life in general under the Soviet Government. It is the aim of the following chapters to show how the life of the Russian peasant has been altered and remodelled, and how eventually he seems fated to become an industrial land worker instead of a peasant farmer. Whether this transformation is for the ultimate advantage of the peasant and for the people as a whole is a matter of opinion ; the reader will be able to form his own opinion. But to afford some background a few words on the nature and character of the pre-War peasant may be added.

In pre-War Russia the word *moujik* was a general term applied to a man of the lower orders but not exclusively of the peasant class ; while *krestianin*, the specific word for peasant, was more often used to indicate that a man was legally a member of the peasant class. One would refer to the inhabitants of a village generally as *krestiane*

(plural), but to a single peasant encountered on the road as a moujik. Now the word moujik is a sort of diminutive of *mouzh*, or man, and has a slight suggestion of the sub-human. In fact it is a relic of the days of serfdom, when the serf was not accorded the full status of manhood.

As was shown in the frequent sporadic peasant risings, culminating in the events of 1905 and in the final revolution of 1917, the peasants when excited to violence were capable of appalling brutality and senseless destruction of property. Both in 1905 and in 1917 and 1918 there were cases in which peasants savagely murdered landowners and their stewards simply and solely because they represented the land-owning class and not because they had exploited or oppressed the peasants. There were certainly cases of landowners being spared because of their charity and good works, sometimes even property was respected for the same reasons ; but there were many more cases of insensate wrecking and ill-treatment, and not seldom the killing of landowners and their families in spite of all their kindnesses. On the other hand, peasants actually in the personal employ of landowners were generally loyal and devoted when decently treated. During the pogroms in 1917 many women and children alone on country estates owed their lives to their household servants. The peasant was very much a child of Nature, with the irresponsibility, changing moods and herd instinct of the savage.

His personal habits were often repulsive and he could seldom be called a "Nature's gentleman"; on the other hand, he had a tradition of hospitality

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and was ready to help other members of his community in distress. His religion was largely a matter of superstition, and the village Pope (orthodox priest) imposed upon his credulity. The relations between the Pope and his parishioners were such that, if a peasant had paid for some special act of intercession which turned out barren of result, he considered himself quite justified in thrashing the Pope. Of course there were good men among the clergy who gained the love and respect of the peasants, but they were in a minority.

The vicious side of the peasant's character has, for obvious reasons, been exaggerated by the Bolsheviks and copied from them by foreign socialist writers, who could not say two words to a Russian peasant without an interpreter. It is quite true that on festive occasions the peasant indulged immoderately in vodka, but every decent peasant confined his serious bouts to his own and the Church's anniversaries. That is not to say he did not drink at all in-between-whiles, but he did not allow it to interfere with his work. The peasant who tumbled out of season as well as in season was despised and ridiculed and not infrequently given the thankless and unprofitable position of village elder, or *starosta*, which nobody else was self-sacrificing enough to take. Laziness is another charge that is too often indiscriminately brought. When necessary, for instance, at seed-time and harvest, the peasants worked with astonishing energy ; when there was no urgency they took life easily, in winter especially, spending days on end sleeping on top of the stove. There was literally nothing to be done in winter except mend harness,

repair farm implements, etc., unless the village had a *kustarny* (cottage handicraft) tradition. In some parts the women spent their spare time in lace-making and embroidery, and in other parts the men did wood-carving and made furniture for the urban market. In these circumstances the enforced idleness during the winter months was put to profitable use. When the Stolypin land reform of 1906 released the peasants from the restrictions imposed by the *mir* on personal initiative, the peasants who became independent peasant farmers showed that they possessed plenty of energy and determination when it was a question of their own prosperity. No doubt the majority of peasants who took advantage of the land reform were among the more ambitious, intelligent and industrious; but a great deal of the legendary sloth and indifference of the Russian peasant was due to the communal system, which always hindered the individual from rising above his fellows by his own exertions.

Like most rather primitive folk, the Russian moujik was extraordinarily clever at making things for his own use out of most unpromising material. In the northern forests, for instance, birch bark was put to a multitude of uses, including receptacles, for liquids that hardly leaked at all, and *lapti* (sandals) from the twisted inner bark or bast. In the steppe country of the Ukraine, practically timberless, the peasant cottages were made of reeds and clay; and throughout the whole country harness, made of home-tanned leather or raw hide, and farm implements made by the village blacksmith and wheelwright, were the rule. It was only

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during the last few years before the War that factory-made farm implements and household goods began to penetrate the depths of the country. But, curiously enough, the peasant, so clever with his hands in these primitive ways, is not a great success when it comes to handling machinery. It is perhaps more a mental than a physical ineptitude, for one of the chief causes of mechanical breakdown is the omission to oil bearings, etc. Tractors and motor cars are always under repair because of some carelessness, and when returned to duty often relapse at once because a nut or a bolt has been left out or misplaced. It takes at least a generation to turn a Russian peasant into a reasonably decent mechanic. This was discovered long ago when factories were first equipped with power-driven machinery. It would not be much exaggeration to say that even up to the War nearly every large factory in Russia had a stiffening of foreign engineers, mechanics and even foremen because so few Russians, whatever their theoretical qualifications, could be trusted with the responsibility of seeing that the same monotonous but necessary things were done day after day and week after week. The Russian easily gets bored and hankers after novelty ; he is capable of a burst of intense enthusiasm and energy, usually succeeded by a period of reaction and apathy, for which the climate, with its short urgent summer and long torpid winter, no doubt is partly responsible.

In the last ten years before the War, that is, after the rulers of the country had at last fully realised that the ignorant peasant with his archaic system of farming was an anachronism in a civilised

State, the extension of education and the introduction of improved agricultural methods, together with the use of machinery, made remarkable strides. The Government policy was directed towards creating a new class of comparatively large and well-to-do peasant proprietors to replace the millions of small communal holdings, and the initial results showed that the legendary stupidity and indolence of the peasants were not so much innate qualities as due to their environment and condition of life. Unfortunately the short period that intervened before the War and the revolution did not allow the new policy to have any effect on the great mass of peasant population.

As soon as they had settled their urban and industrial problems, the Bolsheviks turned their attention to the land with the same ruthlessness and impetuosity they had displayed in other directions. Rather naturally the peasants were bewildered and resentful, especially over the collectivisation, which upset their traditional manner of life and was contrary to their instincts and habits. It cannot be denied that as a member of a collective farm the peasant has infinitely less liberty and economic freedom than as an independent farmer. The Bolsheviks, of course, consider that economic freedom and individual self-reliance are pernicious principles and incompatible with the socialist State. The education, the machinery and the science they have given the peasants are certainly appreciated, especially by the younger generation. But in becoming a mere mechanic or a specialised worker in some single branch of agriculture, the new generation of peasants will inevitably lose many of

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the good as well as some of the bad qualities of their forebears, and whether the losses will be outweighed by the gains is still in doubt, except to those who hold that personal determination and individuality are inherently bad.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ORIGIN OF SERFDOM

THE two centuries during which the Russian peasant population lived under conditions of serfdom left their stamp on the country's whole economic life and differentiated it from the typical national economies in the West. Many books, the best of which have been translated into English, are available for those who wish to study the history of Russian serfdom ; therefore only a general outline of the causes and effects of serfdom need be attempted here.

Historians generally agree that the Russian State was inaugurated by people of Scandinavian origin, known as Varangians, who as merchant adventurers and traders entered Russia from the North and, traversing the country by its rivers, eventually reached the Black Sea, and finally Byzantium. The native Slav population, which itself was not autochthonous, having migrated eastward from the Carpathians possibly as late as the sixth or seventh century, was socially and culturally vastly inferior to the Varangians. Wherever the latter founded settlements, as at Kiev on the river Dnieper, they formed a superior community and inevitably began to exercise authority or leadership over the surrounding Slavonic tribes. The important thing to remember is that there was no conquest nor enslavement of the natives. They

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remained free, but under the influence of the new settlers. Another important point is that the native tribes were partly nomad ; that is to say, they did not dwell in permanent villages nor make permanent farms, but after growing crops on a particular bit of land for, perhaps, three or four years, moved on somewhere else. The importance of this was that the notion of private and permanent ownership of a particular piece of land did not take root. All land, unless it was in *de facto* occupation and utilisation, was open to settlement. The assumption of *de jure* ownership of the soil by the early Princes, therefore, did not apparently violate the rights of the natives, whose liberty was not thereby curtailed. These early Princes were in reality little more than local chieftains surrounded by a number of followers to whom they were *primus inter pares*. In order to attach these followers, or *boyars*, to their service or reward them for services rendered, the Princes made them grants of land. In effect this was a delegation of the Prince's sovereign rights to the grantee ; in practice what it really amounted to was transferring to the latter the Prince's right of collecting taxes or levies from the native peasant population. In return the boyar was bound to follow his Prince to war at the head of a contingent of his own people.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, service to the State had become a corporate and hereditary obligation from which no member of the noblesse was exempt. A certain number of noble families possessed hereditary estates of their own, but the majority of State servitors were granted estates only for life in recognition of their

services. Even hereditary estates could revert to the State in the event of there being no heir capable of rendering service. State service was primarily military service, and every *pomestchik* (i.e. one who held a *pomestie* or estate on conditions of service) was obliged to produce a certain number of men-at-arms when required; but the peasants on his *pomestie*, though compelled to render tithe or service, were not yet serfs. Broadly speaking, the underlying principle of the system was that the peasants who occupied land belonging to a *dvorianin* (a member of the noblesse) had to maintain him in order that he should be able to devote all his time and energies to the service of the State. The peasants, in a sense, were serving the State at second hand. In practice the peasants fulfilled their liabilities in two ways, either by surrendering part of their crops to supply their *pomestchik* with the necessities of life or by performing a stated amount of work on the latter's own fields. Since the majority of *pomestchiki* were, owing to their duties, absentee landlords, the former system, known as *obrok*, was more frequent than the latter, known as *barstchina*. Sometimes the peasant's liability was a compound of both.

Clearly a *pomestie* was practically valueless unless it contained a peasant population to develop its resources. Until nearly the middle of the seventeenth century every peasant taking up land in a *pomestie* made a contract with the *pomestchik* in which his right to leave his plot was formally acknowledged. However, a peasant could only leave at a certain time of year, in November, after harvest had been collected and the year's work

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completed, and then only if free of debt to the pomestchik. Since practically no peasant possessed any capital of his own, a loan in money or kind or both was almost invariably necessary at the start of a tenancy. Absconding peasants could be prosecuted and brought back within a certain time-limit. But these conditions did not satisfy the landowning class which agitated for further rights until, in 1649, Tsar Alexei granted laws which legalised the recovery of runaway peasants without any time-limit and in effect introduced the principle of hereditary bondedness. Where previously the individual peasant had legally been bound, at most, to his individual landlord during the latter's life, henceforth the peasant and his descendants were bound to the landlord and his heirs indefinitely. It must not, however, be imagined that the introduction of serfdom can be definitely dated. History shows that the freedom and rights of the peasants had been gradually invaded over a long period, and the most that can be said is that the *ulozhenie* or code issued in 1649 did more than any other law, decree or *ukaz* to convert the peasants into serfs.

Though serfdom benefited the landowner most, it also fitted in with the Government's policy. In course of time the peasants, in addition to their original function of supporting the servitors of the State, had become direct payers of State taxes. For administrative purposes the peasants were combined in communities and were taxed collectively. Therefore there were two reasons why the State found it advantageous to have the peasant population permanently attached to the soil. In

the first place the efficiency of the dvorians as State servitors depended on their own revenues resulting from the serf exploitation of their estates, and in the second place the collection of taxes was facilitated by a fixed population, the taxes being levied on the total land actually cultivated by each peasant commune and not on the individual holdings.

Under Peter the Great serfdom was intensified. Peter demanded increased service from all classes of his subjects. In order that the labour of the peasant classes should be better organised, he forced a very large proportion of the existing free labour into serfdom, including industrial as well as purely agricultural workers, and in place of the former communal taxation he introduced a poll tax, payable by every male peasant irrespective of the amount of land cultivated. This had one important result. Formerly, when the land itself was taxed the peasants refrained from ploughing surplus land. Obviously they would not risk doing anything with their land unless it promised a substantial return over and above the tax. But when the tax was shifted to the individual, the inhibition on increasing the area of arable land was removed.

In his eagerness to promote industry, Peter also extended to the merchant class the hitherto exclusive right of the nobility to acquire villages (*i.e.* land settled with bonded peasants) on condition that the said villages were used for the benefit of the industrial enterprises concerned. In introducing this innovation Peter was not moved by any considerations for the merchant manufacturer class. He regarded industry as essential to the

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progress of the State and the proprietor of an industrial establishment as rendering a service to the State. In all his reforms the same motive appears. Peter cared nothing for class rights and privileges. In fact he promoted a number of men of humble origin to high administrative posts over the heads of the old nobility, who had to make what they could of it. If he found it convenient for his purpose to put the peasants under even stricter subjection to the upper classes, he demanded yet more from the latter. He was convinced that Russia was in no way inferior to the rest of the world in natural resources and that only the State could properly develop these resources, and that by compulsion. Hence serfs were committed to landowners and industrialists not as personal possessions for their own purposes, but as a trust from the State to enable them to fulfil the demands of the State.

Obligatory service to the State by the nobility and gentry was brought to an end by an ukaz of 18th February 1762, in which Peter III conferred "upon all the well-born of our Russian nobility full freedom from service and release thence". Not a word was said concerning the nobles' serf-right, though this derived from the nobles' compulsory service. Since the death of Peter I, the nobility, entrenching itself more firmly behind prerogatives and privileges, had regained for itself the monopoly of serf-right and secured an extension of the pomestchik's judicial-police authority over his own serfs and the right of selling serfs apart from the land. The release of the nobility from obligatory State service aggravated rather than alleviated the serfs'

position, for the serf-owners now regarded their serfs as their own personal property and the source of their wealth. In fact the serfs had descended to a position practically of slavery, and the wealth of a noble landowner depended more on the number of his serfs than the area of his estates. Generally speaking three different ways of exploiting serf labour were in vogue: firstly in agriculture, the landowner either allowing his serfs to cultivate his entire estate, paying him as rent a fixed proportion of the yield or a money rent, or using their labour to cultivate his own farms, leaving the serfs a certain amount of land to cultivate for their own needs; secondly, by employing his serfs in some sort of industrial enterprise, predominantly iron foundries or cloth mills; thirdly, allowing his serfs to take up independent pursuits or work for wages in return for an annual fee, varying according to time and circumstances from one or two roubles a year to more than R.100. The form of exploitation was largely influenced by the region in which the estate was situated. Thus in the fertile black-soil areas serf-owners tended to employ their serfs as agricultural labourers, while in the more densely populated and relatively unfertile northern provinces many serf-owners enjoyed large incomes from the monetary obrok paid by their serfs in return for liberty to engage in industrial pursuits.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PEASANT IN INDUSTRY

INDUSTRY as distinct from handicrafts may be said to have originated in the fifteenth century, when Ivan III imported a Venetian to organise a foundry for the manufacture of cannons and bells. In the first half of the seventeenth century industrial enterprises included the manufacture of paper, glass, velvet, etc., that is, mainly luxury goods for the use of the court or the Government. These enterprises were almost all established by foreigners brought into Russia by the Tsar, who provided the necessary sites, raw material and a large part of the labour. But the needs of the population at large were still supplied by peasant handicraft and the domestic *kholopy* (more or less slaves) of the rural nobility. Part of the obrok rendered by peasants to their pomestchiki frequently consisted of manufactured commodities, such as homespun linen and cloth, while barstchina could take the form of work as blacksmiths, carpenters, etc., as well as of agricultural labour. The country therefore was almost entirely based on a natural economy, and though by the middle of the seventeenth century a certain number of merchants had begun manufacturing consumer's goods for the market in enterprises employing free labour, the volume of output and the demand for manufactured goods were insignificant.

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The industrial revolution of the early eighteenth century was due to Peter the Great, who, like the Bolsheviks, believed in self-sufficiency for war and set about creating industries to manufacture arms and equipment. On his accession he found ten iron foundries in the country under orders "to cast cannons, bombs and bullets, and to make arms for the service of the State". But these by no means satisfied him either in regard to quantity or quality of output. His original scheme was to import foreign engineers, place at their disposal Crown estates with the attached serfs in districts where minerals were plentiful, and order them to go ahead, both in manufacturing arms and in training Russians in their arts. These State enterprises, however, proved a heavy drain on the Treasury, and Peter decided to transfer them to private entrepreneurs under contract to deliver the finished goods to him. As usual, private enterprise seems to have been more efficient than State enterprise for, sheltered by high protective tariffs, factories were a highly profitable form of enterprise. The demand for labour expanded more rapidly than the supply of free workers. In this there is a striking parallel with the industrialisation of Soviet Russia during the Five-Year Plan. In Peter's time numbers of new, and for the period very large-scale, enterprises were suddenly created without the background of industrial skill and tradition that obtains in a country where small private enterprises have gradually developed into large ones *pari passu* with the supply and skill of labour. Peter imported foreign specialists as did the Bolsheviks and, like them, he found an intense cen-

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tralisation of control inefficient. But while Peter was able to transfer his enterprises to private persons, the Bolsheviks had to form more or less autonomous trusts to administer their factories. Both Peter and the Bolsheviks adopted similar methods of recruiting labour for large-scale constructional work. The former employed prisoners of war, civilian population from occupied territory and State serfs to construct canals on lakes Ladoga and Onega and elsewhere, and when short of skilled labour he had whole townships transferred to the scenes of his new enterprises. Peter's forced labour camps are almost exactly reproduced in the Bolshevik camps in North Russia, which provided the labour for the White Sea-Baltic Canal, the Svir hydro-electric scheme and other enterprises. The Bolsheviks also took the labour they required mainly from among the peasants, though they found it expedient to justify their action by calling their forced peasant labourers *kulaks*, anti-social wreckers, etc.

Peter had no intention whatever of giving the nobility a monopoly of industry, which so long as they alone could employ serf labour they enjoyed to a very large extent. In 1721 he issued an ukaz under which members of the merchant class could acquire "villages" (lands settled with bonded krestiane) on condition that those "villages" were used for the benefit of the industrial enterprises concerned, and that "inalienably those villages should pertain unto the said foundries." But there was a difference between the rights of merchant manufacturers and nobles over their serfs. The former only possessed the labour of their serfs, who

were legally attached to the factory and were not the absolute property of the factory-owner. In fact the relations of the serfs to the merchant factory-owner were somewhat on a par with the relationship between serfs and landowners prior to the ulozhenie of 1649, which gave the latter the right of disposing of his serfs' persons as well as their labour, and established the principle of hereditary bondedness.

In the conditions obtaining in the eighteenth century, bonded labour was on the whole as economical as free labour. Practically all processes were carried out by hand and there was little to choose between the low standard of skill and efficiency of the free and bonded workers. In such industries as mining and iron smelting, where the quantity of available labour was more important than the quality, progress was rapid, and in the last quarter of the eighteenth century Russia became one of the world's chief exporters of pig iron. Though the chief industry of the country was its ironworks, the manufacturer of textiles, leather goods, glass, etc., in large-scale enterprises also expanded. The largest unit enterprises which employed the greatest aggregate amount of labour were the woollen mills, because, next to arms, clothing was the Army's chief necessity. A number of State woollen factories were established by Peter's Government, and many others were founded by private persons with State assistance, primarily to supply cloth for uniforms. The woollen industry naturally was mainly in the hands of nobles, who disposed of plenty of cheap serf labour. While the men worked on the land the women performed barstchina labour in their owners' mills.

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It was inevitable that Peter's industrialisation programme should give rise to a class of skilled industrial workers. Many of these skilled workers were of course serfs and could not leave the factory to which they were attached, but the majority and the most highly skilled were free workers, because as a rule the serf was too apathetic to try to improve his technical skill. For this reason the increasing use of machinery brought about a proportional decline in the employment of serf labour as factory operatives compared with free wage-earners, and resulted in serf labour being more and more relegated to the unskilled jobs, sometimes even being employed outside the factory to grow raw material such as flax and hemp.

The remuneration of serf labour varied greatly. Serf labour was economic only because it was cheap, but physical efficiency had to be maintained, and it was therefore bad policy to starve the workers. Some factory-owners paid money wages, some provided subsistence in kind and some paid money wages and issued rations of food. Such conditions applied to factories near towns or where labour was brought from a distance and housed by the factory-owner. Many factories, however, were built in the country near the source of labour. Most of the nobles' factories were on their owners' estates, while the merchant industrialists erected their factories near the village whose labour they had purchased from the landowner. In such circumstances it was not unusual to compel part of the population to work in the factory, while the remainder grew crops to supply

the factory hands with food. Some factories worked only in winter when the peasants would in any case be unemployed on the land, and most factory-owners released all, or nearly all, their workers for field work during the busy agricultural seasons. So long as factories were run with only simple hand-operated machinery they could stand idle for weeks at a time without loss, but later, when machinery and plant represented a considerable capital outlay, factory-owners became increasingly reluctant to shut down for extended periods. In the nineteenth century the increasing amount of fixed capital represented by industrial enterprises was accompanied by a growing industrial proletariat, which, originally of peasant origin, rapidly became urbanised and divorced from the land ; though even at the close of the century the number of permanent factory workers was only a small fraction of the total population.

## CHAPTER IV

### SERFDOM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

TOWARDS the end of the eighteenth century there were faint stirrings of conscience and a feeling that the institution of serf-right (*krepstnoe pravo*) was an anachronism. Catherine II debated the question of giving the serfs their freedom, but economic as well as political considerations delayed action. In 1802 an ukaz prohibited sending peasant serfs to work in distant places, but in 1803, when there was a shortage of cloth for military uniforms, the Government again allowed the cloth mills to procure labour whence they could. As a rule the serf-owning landowners were not, as conditions then were, merciless taskmasters, and cases of extreme brutality and ill-treatment were, when known, punished by the Government. Serfs were a source of wealth, and a landowner was generally described as the master of so many souls rather than as the owner of so many acres. In times of famine and distress the serf-owner, from motives of self-interest as much as of humanity, helped his people to carry on till times improved.

The Russian peasant is proverbially prolific. Between 1762 and 1812 the total population increased from about 19 to 41 millions, and in Russia proper, that is roughly the area now known as Great Russia, the peasant population provided considerably more than enough labour to cultivate

all the good agricultural land. In the less fertile regions, generally speaking to the north and north-east of Moscow, it was not worth while employing the increase in population to bring new land under cultivation so long as sufficient food was produced for the local population. The natural consequence was that industry and handicrafts arose and developed much more rapidly in those parts than in the fertile provinces in the South, where it paid to grow grain for the market. It was principally for this reason that the North was, and still is, far more industrialised than the South. At the beginning of the nineteenth century over 50 per cent of the total serfs in the less fertile regions were engaged partly or wholly in some form of industrial activity, while in the Black Earth districts only some 20 per cent were not fully engaged in agriculture.

Only a comparatively small part of the total number of peasants wholly or partly engaged in non-agricultural pursuits were bound to factories, the majority being employed as free wage-earners or working as independent artisans or craftsmen paying obrok to their pomestchiki out of their earnings. Before a peasant could leave his village, the consent of the commune and of his own family had to be obtained as well as of his pomestchik. Every peasant as a member of a commune was responsible for his share of the total taxes payable by the commune and as a member of a household, or *dvor*, was responsible for his share in his *dvor*'s liabilities and for his share in cultivating the *dvor*'s *nadiel*, or allotment of land. The more members that were absent from their village the higher was the tax burden on, and the greater

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the toil of, those remaining at home. Therefore members absent on obrok had to pay a fixed sum or a certain proportion of their earnings to their family, or to the commune if head of a family, as indemnification. The actual amount was a matter of agreement and varied according to the absentee's estimated earning power and the degree of his responsibility. A man with a family would be expected to remit more money home than a single man.

Many serfs on obrok toured the country as artisans and seasonal skilled workers. They were, as a rule, good workers, since if they failed to keep up their remittances they were liable to be recalled to their villages. It is interesting to note that in the 30's and 40's of last century the only really free artisans in the Baltic Provinces, who could go where they liked and work for whom they liked, were Russian serfs on obrok, although the Baltic peasants had nominally ceased to be serfs in the second decade of the century.

Another thing which preserved the connection of the peasant with his village was the fact that as well as liabilities he possessed rights. The communal land belonging to the village was allotted to the different families generally in accordance with the number of their men-folk, and each male member of a family had a right to his share of the family land and chattels, which ensured him a retreat and a livelihood if he became incapable of earning his living in the outside world. So long as a peasant retained his stake in his village he could never become outcast and destitute, and if a harvest failure reduced him to starvation he starved

in company and not alone. A very large proportion of the peasants on obrok, and even of those on forced labour, returned to their villages at harvest-time and perhaps at seed-time to help with the work. Even at the end of the nineteenth century there was still a seasonal migration of labour from the country to the industrial centres and *vice versa*, though the skilled factory operatives for the most part had given up their agricultural connections and had settled down permanently in the industrial centres. In some ways the dual life of so many peasant workers tended to retard economic progress, for labour that oscillates to and fro between two different forms of employment is apt to be inefficient in both.

Properly to appreciate the mutual relations between pomestchik and serf it is important to realise the difference in the point of view of the Russian serf-owner and the point of view of the Central European serf-owner at a time when serfdom prevailed outside as well as inside Russia. In the eighteenth century a foreign observer summed up the difference between serfdom in Russia and Germany as follows :

The German nobleman reckons his property in terms of fields, forests, fisheries and other amenities. These are his capital, while his people are the means by which this capital is exploited and made to yield a revenue. In Russia the bonded people form the assets of the serf-owner, who regards his land estate merely as a means of maintaining his human assets. These keep themselves as best they can while paying a poll tax to the State Treasury as well as an annual contribution to their own master. (Georgi. *Bemerkungen einer Reise im Russischen Reiche in den Jahren 1773 und 1774.*)

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One might liken the Russian pomestchik to the American rancher or Australian squatter about the middle of last century, who regarded their land merely as a means of maintaining a given head of cattle or sheep. In all three cases it was not the land itself that constituted the owner's wealth, but the number of serfs, cattle, or sheep that it maintained. And it occurred to the pomestchik no more than it did to the rancher to invest capital in improving the carrying capacity of the land. But in America and Australia, when the available land was all taken up and began to possess an unimproved value because the supply was restricted, the owners began to put up fences, dam streams, dig wells and try to make their property more valuable. A very small proportion of pomestchiki ever seem to have appreciated the possibilities of their land as a direct revenue-producing asset; comparatively few farmed their own land or made any attempt to improve its yield so that they might receive a larger direct return in the shape of agricultural produce, or a larger indirect return in the form of more obrok from their serfs.

Among the reasons for the average pomestchik's indifference to his estate were :

- (1) The early system of compulsory State service, which kept the landowner at the capital or in some provincial centre and prevented him giving his personal attention to the land.
- (2) The practice, which continued up to the time of Peter I, of granting a pomestie together with its complement of serfs to a

State servitor for the term of his service or at most for life, which hindered the rise of any notion of family attachment to an estate and consequently removed the most powerful incentive to its development.

- (3) The lack of a market for agricultural produce.

When an export market for grain sprang up, a certain number of landowners in the Black Earth belt took to farming their own land with the barstchina of their serfs, often reducing the latter's allotments to a minimum and providing them with a ration of grain in compensation. Largely as a result of this practice, the peasants in the principal grain regions received at the emancipation on an average smaller nadieli than in the other parts of the country.

Whether serfs were on obrok or barstchina it was obviously to the serf-owner's interest to maintain as large a number of able-bodied serfs as possible. If the number grew to exceed the capacity of the land, the surplus sought other employment ; and in fact some celebrated serf-owners in the Northern provinces, such as the Sheremetiev family, enjoyed enormous incomes from the obrok paid by their serfs, who not only earned wages as industrial workers but, in some cases, became independent manufacturers themselves employing hired labour.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EMANCIPATION

SERFDOM reached its apex during the reign of Catherine II (1762–96) when serfs could be bought and sold with or apart from land, in families or singly. Public auctions of serfs only were forbidden. The first restriction on serf-right was a law of Tsar Paul in 1797 which forbade the pomestchik to make his serfs work for him on more than three days in the week. Six years later another law allowed pomestchiki to free their serfs by whole villages or by families on conditions arrived at by mutual agreement. In order that freed serfs should not be simply turned adrift, the law provided that the pomestchik must also allot them an adequate amount of land. The effect of this law was insignificant; by 1855 the freed serfs numbered only 116,000 revisional souls; that is, tax-paying male peasants. Another law in 1842 empowered pomestchiki to conclude mutual agreements with their peasants under which the former retained the ownership of the land while the latter received an allotment for their own use under certain stipulated obligations. Under this law the bonded serf could become an “obligated peasant” whose forced labour on the pomestchik’s land was thereby transformed into an agrarian obligation representing an indemnification to the pomestchik for the peasant’s use of his land. The immediate results of this law

were also negligible ; its importance lay in the fact that, together with other laws regulating the relations between pomestchik and serf, the way was prepared for the ultimate reform.

The Act of Emancipation (19th February 1861) released all peasants from bonded dependency. It affected in various ways some 40 million peasants, of whom about half were serfs on private estates and the other half serfs on Crown land, appanage estates and land belonging to religious foundations. The conditions of the serfs in the last-named categories were generally less hard than in private ownership, where the demands of the State and private owner combined left the serf nothing but the bare means of existence. The law compelled the pomestchiki to make over to the peasants their dwellings and a given amount of land, and in return the peasants were to render certain stated liabilities. The peasants were granted the right to redeem their homesteads, but could not acquire absolute ownership of their farm land without the consent of the landowner. At the same time the Government came to the assistance of the peasants with a redemption loan to enable them to purchase their nadieli from the landowners. Nevertheless, even twenty years after the emancipation a large proportion of the peasants in the Central Black Earth Governments were still engaged in working off their obligations to the landowners and a law was passed ordering that, by 1st January 1883, all peasant-pomestchik obligatory relations should come to an end.

Originally the redemption loan was to be extinguished by instalments paid by the peasants over

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49 years, but in many parts of the country the peasants' liabilities were so large in comparison with the livelihood capacities of their nadiel that arrears mounted up. Various palliative measures were adopted from time to time until a manifesto of 3rd November 1905 ended all further payments from the peasants as from 1st January 1906. The end of redemption payments and the Stolypin land reforms of 1906 marked an important stage in the position of the peasant farmer. But before examining the intentions and results of the Stolypin land reforms, it is necessary to see what effect the emancipation had on the peasants themselves.

The intention of the emancipation law was that the peasants should retain for their own use the land already occupied and farmed by and for themselves. In actual fact the total area allotted to the freed serfs as their nadiel was some 15 per cent less than the area they had cultivated for their own needs before the emancipation. While each peasant was individually responsible for redeeming his homestead, the arable land was redeemable by the peasant commune or mir in agreement with the pomestchik. When agreement was reached the State undertook to provide financial assistance to the mir of 75 to 80 per cent of the price, but if no agreement were reached the landlord could claim a compulsory settlement. He then received in the form of State Bonds only 80 per cent of the value of the land based on a capitalisation at 6 per cent of the former obrok paid by the peasants. Voluntary agreements were comparatively rare and a very important content of the redemption law was the "mutual guarantee" under which all the

members of the mir were jointly responsible for the payment of the annuities and, as a corollary, the field land belonged to the community as a whole and not to the individual peasant households. At the time of the emancipation there existed a strong feeling in Government circles that the communal system should give way to separate individual peasant farms. In fact a law was passed under which a commune could be dissolved by a two-thirds majority decision of its members and each household allowed to redeem outright its own nadiel. As it stood, this law had little practical result, and the Government, in spite of its distrust of the communal system, hesitated to take decisive measures for its disappearance, mainly because of its close connection with the mutual guarantee. In the 1880's it began to be realised that the mutual guarantee had outlived its usefulness and had proved an inefficient instrument for liquidating arrears of communal liability, which continued to increase. An enquiry was held which showed that a considerable portion of the outstanding arrears were due from the richer peasants, who, in spite of, or rather because of, the mutual guarantee, had succeeded in evading their proper share of the commune's debts.

The Emancipation Law allowed nadieli to be alienated under certain conditions. True, this did not result in any considerable number of peasants becoming landless, for in the years 1870-90 only 100,000 *dessiatini* (about 270,000 acres) of nadiel land was transferred into non-peasant ownership. But the impoverishment of the peasants, which the emancipation had done nothing to remedy but

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had in some ways even intensified, made it desirable to prevent further alienations, for instances were beginning to occur of whole communes parting with their land. In 1893, therefore, a law was passed forbidding peasants to part with their nadieli except to members of their own commune and revoking the right of individual peasants to demand the transfer of their nadieli into their own freehold possession by purchase before the full repayment of the redemption loan. Another law in the same year was directed against the private redistribution of nadiel land, to prevent the subdivision of a single nadiel into several diminutive holdings; the same law also laid down as a principle that redistribution of the communal nadiel among the different households be repeated at not less than twelve-year intervals and be carried out under the supervision of the local governing authority.

These measures kept the land in the peasants' hands, but did not confer any perceptible benefit on them. Meanwhile the growth of the population called for an increase in the productivity of the land and an increase in the amount of land under cultivation, but the peasants' lack of capital was the great obstacle to improved methods of agriculture and to an extension of the arable land. For this also the communal system of land-holding was to blame, since it was extremely prodigal of labour and rendered the use of any but the simplest farm implements impracticable.

The characteristics of communal land-holding were :

- (1) Distribution in strips.
- (2) Compulsory adherence by all members of the commune to a common rotation of crops.
- (3) Temporary occupation by the individual of his allotment.
- (4) Periodical alterations in the size of allotments.

The strip lay-out of peasant farm land goes back to almost prehistoric times and at one time was universal over Northern and Central Europe. A better description of, and the reasons for, the system than that given by Miss Doreen Warriner in *Economics of Peasant Farming* cannot be found. We therefore take the liberty of quoting her work :

The land of the village had to be used mainly to grow bread crops for the consumption of all the families in the village. Each family had to have enough land to feed itself, and as in a primitive state the quality of land varies much more than when it can be improved by drainage and manuring, each family had to share in the good land and the bad. Almost all the cultivated land was under corn crops, except for a few meadows near the stream and the houses. Continuous cropping under corn exhausted the soil, and to avoid this it had to be left fallow every third year. Of course this was an immense waste ; one-third of the land produced nothing ; but with no alternative crops and very little manure it could not be avoided. The rotation followed was the so-called three-field — winter corn (rye or wheat), spring corn (wheat or barley) and fallow. This course had to be enforced on all owners, otherwise the crops of one would have spread into the fallows of the others. It was also necessary that all the crops should be the same in each area, because after harvest the cattle of the village grazed in herds on the fields and had to be let in on the same

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date. Thus the feature which later became an obstacle to progress was inevitable in mediaeval conditions ; it was no hardship to be compelled to grow crops in a certain rotation when no others could be grown.

As the number of households increased without corresponding increase in the amount of land, the strips became narrower and more numerous and, in some parts of the country where the peasant population was dense in proportion to the land occupied, one household might be allotted as many as a hundred strips each only two or three feet wide. The excessive expenditure of labour and inconvenience of cultivating a strip three or four paces across and perhaps some hundreds of paces in length are obvious. It also involved an enormous waste of time in walking from one strip to another, for the strips in different fields might be several miles apart.

Periodical redistribution of the land meant that the peasant farmer was disinclined to go to trouble and expense to make permanent improvement in his strips. Towards the end of his tenancy he would take all he could out of the soil without putting anything back. At the periodical redistributions a household might receive more or less land than it had hitherto possessed — sometimes redistribution was based on the number of workers in each household, sometimes on the number of mouths — and this, because most peasant farms were run on a bare minimum of equipment, might mean that the household possessed insufficient means to cultivate its increased area or, possibly, had more equipment than was absolutely necessary for its decreased holding.

The comparison between the communal system and small enclosed freehold farms was not entirely one-sided. In writings on the subject the communal system with all its defects was too often compared with the ideal small freehold farm. The communal system, as was of course intended, kept the peasant farmers more or less on a common level of poverty or prosperity ; whether this is commendable or not is a matter of opinion. As serfs the peasants had formed a solid homogeneous section of the population, and as free peasant farmers there was no obvious reason why they should have done otherwise. The communal system was not calculated to encourage ambition, a quality with which probably few people credited the Russian moujik. On the other hand, it tended to retard agricultural progress, for in those parts of the country, such as Siberia, Viatka, Perm and Saratov, where freehold peasant farms were the rule, farming methods were more advanced and the standard of living of the peasants as a whole was somewhat higher than in those parts where the communal system prevailed. But the circumstance that really decided the degree of peasant prosperity was the quantity of land in relation to peasant population, the fertility of the land and the proximity of urban markets.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VILLAGE COMMUNE

As we saw, in the last chapter, the emancipation in fact strengthened and consolidated the communal system. As serfs the peasants had been under the control and administration of their landowner; not that the latter interfered much in their domestic and community life. Law and order in the village itself was the responsibility of the village headman, the starosta, elected by the heads of families and assisted in a more or less informal way by a sort of committee of Elders. Disputes between individuals were settled by the starosta and matters affecting the whole community by a general assembly of all heads of families presided over by the starosta. But the starosta himself was answerable to the landowner, whose support he had in the event of his authority being flouted. In a sense the starosta was the representative of the landowner, and between them they managed the whole affairs of the commune, interference by Government officials being very rare, for the landowner was, in effect, the representative of the Government in his own district. The emancipation abolished the authority of the landowner, and consequently the starosta's responsibility and authority were increased and he became, in effect, the representative of the Government. In the old days pastoral land and forests were often held in common by several neighbouring

villages, which thus became linked together and formed a larger unit known as a *volost*. After the emancipation the volost was revived as the primary rural administrative territorial unit. Under the Soviet régime the *rayon* in many respects succeeded the volost as the basic rural administrative and economic unit.

For a true appreciation of the subsequent development of rural economy, even after the revolution, it is important to realise that the village community became a class institution. Nobody but a peasant had any right to vote or hold office in the village or volost assembly, nor could any stranger, not of the peasant class, however long he might be a resident in a village, acquire the right to a share in the communal land. This arrangement was deliberately designed by the Government in order to prevent the old landlords from retaining any voice, and thus any influence, in the peasants' affairs.

At the same time, as explained in previous chapters, a peasant retained his membership of the commune even when he left the village to take employment elsewhere. Even if a peasant felt inclined to sever all connection with his village, it was not easy to carry out because of the passport system. Everybody in Russia had to possess a personal document stating among other biographical details his social status. In the case of the peasants these documents were issued by the volost headman and had to be renewed periodically, and the consequences of being discovered by the police with an expired passport compelled every peasant to keep in touch with his village.

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The results of the deliberately enforced isolation of the most ignorant and by far the most numerous class of the population was unfortunate, not alone for the peasants, but for the whole country. Questions of public hygiene and education as well as the agricultural policy of the commune were discussed and determined by illiterate men with practically no outside help or guidance; consequently the habits and outlook of the peasants remained primitive, if not barbarous, and their standard of living and economic progress did not improve with the advance of science and modern thought in the outside world.

The methods and principles governing the distribution of the communal land varied in different regions, but, generally speaking, the theory was that redistribution should take place every twelve years in those provinces where permanent allotments were not the rule. As a matter of fact, after the emancipation, redistributions were made at most irregular intervals, generally only when there was urgent need to readjust the holdings to the increase and decrease of the members of the separate dvory. This system operated against the separation of families and favoured the persistence of the patriarchal system, which rendered each dvor a sort of commune in miniature. The communal system of land tenure, too, necessarily involved a good deal of communal control of the community's farming activities, so that not only were the times of sowing and harvesting, hay-making and the like very dependent on the decision of the commune as a whole, but the crops to be sown, what land to be left fallow, etc., were

similarly dictated. In such circumstances a natural or primitive form of economy was bound to persist.

Though the social and economic conditions in the commune were precisely those calculated to exert an equalising influence, the post-emancipation history of the peasants shows that differentiation in the village became a problem all the same and was the object of much attention by Russian economists of the time. At the time of the emancipation all the peasants, or rather peasant families, in a commune more or less started from scratch. By the beginning of the twentieth century, or even earlier, the peasants as a whole were divided into three distinct and recognised categories: rich, middle and poor. The distinguishing characteristics of these were: the rich peasant employing hired labour in addition to that of his own family, the middle peasant subsisting wholly on his own farm and employing no outside labour, and the poor peasant subsisting only by taking outside employment for wages. Many poor peasants worked for their rich neighbours or went as seasonal labourers to gather the harvest in other parts of the country. In addition to these, the landless peasants virtually constituted a fourth class. These were true rural proletariat existing almost entirely by selling their labour to others. Their origin, however, was largely different from that of the higher grades of peasantry, for many of them had formerly been household serfs or were the descendants of household serfs who received no nadiel at the emancipation. A certain proportion were peasants who in one way or

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another had lost their land, but the laws forbidding the alienation of nadieli prevented any considerable transfer of poor peasants to the ranks of the landless.

The natural economy prevailing during the early part of the second half of the nineteenth century gave very limited scope for accumulating capital, but as soon as a money economy began to compete with the natural economy, conditions were created in which the hard-working, intelligent and thrifty peasant could produce a saleable surplus and thus improve his situation. Two factors were mainly responsible for creating a market for agricultural produce: one was the construction of railways and the other the industrial expansion. The two things were, of course, connected, and between them they provided a considerable volume of demand by the growing industrial and urban population and the means of transporting foodstuffs from the countryside to the centres of population. The railways also facilitated the export of grain and other agricultural products. At the same time the growth of industry caused the manufacturers to seek to extend their market among the rural population. These conditions stimulated the more enterprising peasant farmers to grow produce for market, and to do this they bought and rented land from non-peasant owners and even rented the nadieli of their poorest neighbours, who lacked both draught animals and implements to cultivate even their small allotments. As soon as conditions were created making capital accumulation possible, differentiation between the peasants was due to,

and conditional on, the development of productive forces.

It seems probable that the impoverishment of the poor peasants was greater than the enrichment of the rich peasants. In other words, the average position of the peasants as a whole deteriorated. Statistics relating to the period at the close of last century show that the average size of the peasant farm and the average number of horses per farm both declined. But at the same time there was a growing tendency for the peasant household to decrease in numbers. During the era of serfdom and for some little time afterwards, conditions favoured a patriarchal family system in which the married sons and their families all lived together and shared in the family's property and in the toil on the family farm. The emancipation from serfdom naturally led by degrees to the younger generation seeking emancipation from patriarchal control, and so households and the land belonging to them became subdivided. Therefore the true criterion of prosperity was not the absolute area of a farm, the quantity of livestock, etc., but the amount of land and stock per head of members of the household. A more powerful cause of peasant impoverishment was the increase in peasant population by nearly 35 millions between 1860 and 1897. Between 1861 and 1905 non-peasant landowners sold some 30 million dessiatini to the peasants, or rather less than one dessiatina per head of the peasant increase, much less than the average quantity of land per head allotted to the peasants at the emancipation. In 1905 the average peasant farm in European Russia, including bought and

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rented land, meadows as well as arable, was 11.1 dessiatini, or approximately 30 acres, and this had to support not less than five persons. The average amount of land under crops each year was not more than 5 dessiatini, or 13.5 acres, which yielded an average grain crop of about 9 bushels to the acre, or some 550 lb. per head. The peasant consumption of cereal food before the War, according to an investigation held into peasant budgets, was at least 530 lb. per head. Therefore it would seem that the average peasant family only just about succeeded in feeding itself. And, in point of fact, the marketable surplus of grain was mainly provided by the estates of non-peasant landowners and large peasant farms which produced some 10 to 15 per cent of the total grain crops.

## CHAPTER VII

### LAND REFORMS

THE most important milestone in Russian agrarian history after the emancipation in 1861 was the land reforms of 1906. These are commonly and justly attributed to Peter Arkadieievich Stolypin, President of the Council of Ministers from 1906 to 1911. But the conviction that some change in the principles of peasant land tenure was necessary had been growing for some time. In 1901 a Government Commission had been appointed to investigate the economic conditions of the peasant population in the Central Governments, and in the following year the Tsar appointed "A Special Committee on the Needs of the Agricultural Industry". These enquiries proved that the peasantry as a whole was becoming more and more impoverished and that the situation demanded immediate remedies. The root of the trouble was the disproportionate increase of the peasant population in relation to the land and the restrictions on the movement of the peasants. As we have seen in previous chapters, the communal system and the laws restricting the alienation of nadiel land tended to keep the peasants on the land. Since the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 the Government's policy had been to prevent the growth of the proletariat, which it regarded as the breeding-ground of revolutionary ideas. The proletariat was recruited from the

landless peasantry, hence the peasantry was to be kept on the land. But the Government had done practically nothing to help the peasants improve their methods of farming; on the contrary, as the population expanded without corresponding increase in capital, agriculture tended to become even more extensive and primitive and the standard of living to fall.

The obvious remedy was to increase the quantity of land in relation to the agricultural population and introduce more intensive methods of farming. But opinion was divided on the question of land tenure. The chief political parties in the first Duma were the Moderate Conservatives, known as Octobrists since the party had been inaugurated as the " Union of October 17 " (1905), the day on which was promulgated the Manifesto granting constitutional government; and the Constitutional Democrats, or Cadets, who were the political successors of the " Union of Liberation " formed in 1903 by Zemstvo leaders, university professors, journalists, etc. The Social Revolutionaries, successors of the Narodniki and the Social Democrats of Marxist convictions, officially boycotted the elections, but adherents of these parties were elected independently and formed a so-called labour group to which most of the peasant deputies, who had no explicit political programme, became attached. The opponents of the *obstchina*, or commune, were the centre parties and the Octobrists, holding that communal tenure hindered the accumulation of capital and the application of labour to the land through preventing the development of individual initiative and enterprise. The

opposition to the communal system was mainly based on an objective and comparatively non-political attitude towards the agrarian problem.

Both the extreme right and the extreme left were advocates of the commune for different political, rather than economic considerations. Reactionary opinion considered that if the authority of the mir were to be relaxed, liberal or even socialist ideas would be encouraged. It also subscribed to the Slavophil theory that the mir was a distinctive and peculiar attribute of traditional Russian civilisation and that harm only would follow if it were superseded by ideas adopted from abroad. The Social Revolutionaries beheld in the *obstchina* the prototype of their ideal form of land tenure, namely nationalisation or socialisation; while the Social Democrats, true to their Marxist theories, believed that capitalism sooner or later was bound to proletarianise the peasant and create capitalist farms on which the peasant would become a wage-earning labourer. Their programme envisaged large State farms on which the former peasants would labour for a socialist remuneration in the same way as labourers in industry. The Social Democrats did not, of course, advocate the retention of the *obstchina* from conviction, they merely wanted to delay or prevent the rise of a class of independent capitalist farmer. Thus the Social Revolutionaries and the Social Democrats were sharply divided on a point of principle. The former accused the Marxists of wanting to "boil the peasant in the factory boiler", by which they meant reducing the peasant to the same state of proletarianism as the industrial workers; while the Marxists retorted

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that the idea of a socialist peasant society was an illusion. The Cadets took a middle line. While admitting that the *obstchina* was obsolete they wanted reform to come about by natural evolution without the intervention of legislation. They eventually introduced their own bill in the second Duma giving the *obstchina* the choice of allotting land to a seceding member or buying him out on a valuation of his holding.

It would, no doubt, have been possible to expropriate or buy out the large landowners and distribute their land among the peasants. As a matter of fact some 30 million acres of Crown and State lands were broken up and sold to peasants after the 1906 reforms, but a general breaking-up of large estates would have given only temporary relief until the peasant population had increased up to the capacity of the additional land, especially as private land was scarcest in the densely populated agricultural Central Governments. In any case, the greater part of the privately owned land consisted of forests and non-arable land and a high proportion of the farm land was already leased to the peasants.

While the peasant problem was being argued and discussed, the Russo-Japanese war broke out and became the main contributory cause of the revolution of 1905. This was largely an urban and proletarian movement, but it reached into the countryside, where peasant discontent had already caused a rising in South Russia in 1903, and culminated in serious peasant risings in many parts of the country. Though these were suppressed after a certain amount of property had

been destroyed, some country houses burnt and their owners murdered, the situation clearly required not repression but a real and prompt improvement of the legal and economic condition of the peasants. On November 22nd 1906, after the dissolution of the first Duma, an ukaz was promulgated depriving the mir of its forcible authority over the peasants and giving the latter the right to separate from the commune. It was, of course, impossible suddenly to transfer all peasant lands to private ownership; not only did the peasants themselves have to become accustomed to the idea of independence and personal ownership of their farms; but the technical details of effecting the transfer and enclosure of the land took time, and it was not until 1908 that an effective start was made. The ukaz allowed every head of a peasant family, holding a nadiel by right of communal tenure, to claim the transfer to him as private property of his due share of the communal land. In communes where there had been no general redistribution of land for twenty-four years, the peasant was allowed to claim all the land in his effectual occupation at the time he applied for private ownership; in other communes where redistribution had occurred within the past twenty-four years the peasant was allowed to claim his appropriate share of the communal land, in accordance with the size of his household. This meant that he might be entitled either to more or less land than he actually occupied. If he occupied more than his proper share, he was allowed to purchase the excess from the commune at the average

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price of land fixed for the purpose of redemption at the emancipation. It is important to note that the ukaz gave the individual peasant permanent and personal property in his farm and did not vest it in the household, whereas under the communal system an idea had arisen since the 1880's, without any real legal foundation, that the *nadiel* was a family and not an individual holding.

So far as possible, peasants who decided to separate from the commune were given land in one compact piece instead of the numerous strips falling to their share under the communal distribution. Where this was impossible they received land in allotments as large as practicable and as near together as possible. Where the new farm consisted of a compact single piece of land, the peasant generally moved his homestead out of the village and dwelt in the midst of his own fields. This was not such a serious undertaking as might be imagined, because peasant cottages or cabins were built of logs in the wooded regions or of adobe in the steppe regions. In the former case the logs would be taken apart and re-erected on the new site, in the latter case a new dwelling had to be constructed at the cost of some labour but without any serious expenditure on material. The self-contained farm on which the owner lived was known as a *hutor*, while a farm consisting of one or more separate pieces of land, the owner continuing to dwell in his old homestead in the village, was known as an *otrub*. The question whether a peasant should embark on independence in a *hutor* or *otrub* depended largely on water supplies. In the North *hutors* became the

predominant type of farm, while in the much drier steppes conditions enforced the otrub. Since the technical division of communal land and the surveying of independent farms was carried out by the local Government authorities, some mistakes were inevitable, and many hutors were marked out where they were doomed to failure owing to lack of a water supply or other natural drawbacks.

The peasant who exercised his right to become an independent freeholding farmer did not thereby lose his membership of the commune and all that it implied. He retained his right to the use of the commune's undistributed land, such as common grazing, woodlands, etc., and he still had a voice in the commune's affairs, except as regards the redistribution of the remaining distributable land; also, unless or until he had received his final allotment of land in one piece, his farming cycle had to conform to the crop rotation of the commune. Thus every year the one-third of his land due to lie fallow became part of the communal grazing. But the whole intention of the reform would have been neutralised if the new freehold peasant farms had consisted merely of nadiel land. The aim was to encourage the rise of a class of prosperous peasant farmers with sufficient land to enable them to adopt up-to-date farming methods. It was therefore essential that the new independent peasant farmers should be given the opportunity and means of acquiring additional land, and of this there were two sources: land belonging to private or public owners and land belonging to fellow members of the commune.

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The law which granted the peasants the right to claim their nadieli as private freehold also gave them the right to sell their freehold to other peasants. Thus peasants who wished to leave the commune to emigrate to the Asiatic provinces of the Empire or to become wage-earners in industry were able to liquidate their property.

In the densely populated provinces in Central and South-western Russia the area of land occupied by the peasants at the emancipation was too small to afford even a minimum subsistence. Because grain-growing in the Black Earth belt was a more or less profitable enterprise many landowners had farmed their own land with the barstchina of their serfs, allowing the latter insignificant allotments and making it up to them by rations of the grain they had been instrumental in producing. It was therefore essential that the peasants should somehow obtain more land than the meagre nadieli afforded under the emancipation decree. Though the conditions were not so bad in the other parts of the country, there were few, if any, districts where the nadiel land was fully adequate to the peasants' needs. The landowners took advantage of the peasants' need for more land and either sold or leased them land on onerous terms. In 1882 the Government established the Peasants' Bank to assist the peasants to buy additional land. Originally it advanced 75 per cent or in certain cases 90 per cent of the purchase money on approved transactions at  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent interest inclusive of redemption in  $24\frac{1}{2}$  years, or at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent with redemption in  $32\frac{1}{2}$  years. Such credits were available to whole village communities, to partnerships (*tovarish-*

*chestva*) and to individual peasants. The maximum sum lent was limited to R.125 per male soul under communal tenure, and to R.500 per *dvor* holding its land in perpetuity. In 1887 under a new Finance Minister less generous terms were given, and the previous yearly average of 277,000 *dessiatini* of land bought with its assistance fell to 175,000. In 1892, under the Finance Minister Serge Witte, a more liberal policy was again adopted. In 1895 the interest and redemption on advances was lowered to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent with redemption in  $26\frac{1}{2}$  and  $38\frac{1}{2}$  years respectively. The Bank was also allowed to purchase land on its own account up to the value of its own capital, and to grant loans on mortgage of land not acquired through its services. This allowed the peasants to repay advances granted by private lenders on far more onerous terms. The maximum amount of land which the Bank would assist the peasants to buy varied, according to local conditions, between 25 and 49 *dessiatini* (67.5 and 108 acres) per family in Central Russia and between 40 and 60 *dessiatini* (108 and 162 acres) on the periphery of the country.

After 1905 the Bank's statutes allowed it to purchase land on its own account for peasant settlement without any restriction, and in November 1906 the inclusive rate for loans was reduced to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. After the cancellation of outstanding redemption payments in 1906 the Bank granted loans against mortgage of *nadiel* land for the purchase of additional land or to finance land improvement. In view of the policy of encouraging individual enclosed holdings, preferential treatment

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was given to peasants settling on farms of the hutir type.

As a result of the peasant risings in 1905 many landowners decided to sell their estates, and these were largely bought up by the Bank for closer settlement. On the 1st January 1912 the Bank had 2·8 million dessiatini available for settlement, of which nearly 850,000 were in the Eastern Provinces, *i.e.* east of the Volga, 743,000 on the Middle Volga and 250,000 in the Central Provinces. In the years immediately following 1905 the largest part of the land cut up for closer settlement was sold to voluntary peasant associations (*tovarishchestva*), but from 1909 sales to individuals took the lead and, in 1913, 95 per cent of the Bank's own land and 35·3 per cent of the land transferred direct from landowners was sold to individual peasant farmers. During the period 1883–1912 the Bank was instrumental in settling peasants on about 43 million acres (some 5 million acres more than the total area of England and Wales). Though this seems a large area it was not very large when compared with the total land held by the peasants, amounting to some 345 million acres of *nadiel* land in 1905. At the close of 1916 there were 1·6 million independent farms, both hutirs and otrubs, covering 40 million acres; thus the average size of a farm was about 25 acres. The number of freehold farms was 10·7 per cent of all peasant holdings, the total number of which was about 11·5 millions.

Thus ten years after the initiation of the land reforms in 1906 and immediately before the revolution, a class of relatively prosperous independent peasant farmers had been created. Compared with

the peasant farmers in Central and Western Europe they were still poor and backward ; but compared with the ordinary peasant member of a commune prior to 1906 they were rich and progressive. The improvement in standards of agriculture as a result of the reform and the stimulus given to private initiative is indicated by the increase in the use of artificial fertilisers, which rose by 400 per cent between 1908 and 1912, while in the same four years the output of agricultural machinery by Russian industry expanded seven or eight times. The yield of privately owned land also showed a big advance on that of communal land, for according to an investigation carried out by the economist Oganovski \* a few years after the reform, the average yield of rye on hutior farms was 65 *puds* per dessiatina (equivalent to about 16 bushels per acre) compared with 45 *puds* per dessiatina on otrub farms and 35 *puds* on communal land.

The two chief aims of the reform were well on the way to be realised. Politically the intention was to create a class of substantial peasant proprietors whose interests, if not quite identical, would be at least parallel with those of the land-owner class and who would join with the latter in support of the Government. The success of this policy was afterwards confirmed by the Bolshevik persecution of the kulaks, who naturally were generally the more enterprising and intelligent peasants who had become independent proprietors and prospered as a result of the land reform.

\* Afterwards Assistant Commissar for Agriculture in the Soviet Government up to the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan.

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Economically the reform had not only begun to have an appreciable effect on the standard of farming and the yield of the land, but had given a great stimulus to industry. For the first time in Russian history a section of the rural population was becoming steady purchasers of producers' goods as well as an expanding market for industrial consumption goods.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PEASANT SITUATION AT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

IN the foregoing chapters we have sketched the main outlines of the economic and social development of the Russian peasants from the early days of serfdom to the land reforms of the early twentieth century. These reforms were in process of lifting the peasants from their age-old communal organisation and resettling them as independent self-contained peasant farmers owning their own land. The same process had taken place in the rest of Europe a century or more before it touched Russia.

Between 1906 and 1917 some 1·6 million peasants had become the owners of their own farms, nearly two-thirds as the result of the liquidation of whole communes and the permanent reallocation of the land in more or less compact areas. Somewhat less than one-third of the farms were the result of individual peasants deciding to separate from the commune and claiming as their freehold the communal land they were actually occupying. The remainder of the farms, some 7 per cent, arose in other ways, including group enclosures.\* As we

\* In group enclosures the holdings of a group of peasants, whose land was intermingled with land belonging to another village, or even to another group of peasants in the same large village, were consolidated and enclosed, where necessary, after exchanging the outlying and separated holdings for land nearer the centre of the group.

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saw in the last chapter, less than 11 per cent of peasant households throughout the whole country had become peasant proprietors and the average area of each independent and self-contained farm was about 25 acres.

The peasants who elected to separate from the commune, because they were, generally speaking, more intelligent and more enterprising than the average, already possessed an adequate amount of live and dead stock. Many of them were already small freeholders, having bought land from neighbouring landowners, while still more rented land outside the commune in addition to their nadiel. The new class of peasant proprietors had opportunities of rising that were practically denied to the members of a commune, and were not inhibited from undertaking permanent capital improvements to their land ; also they could grow whatever crops they deemed most profitable. It is worth noting that, for obvious reasons, the idea of dissolving the communes into separate farms as a rule appealed to the peasants in proportion to their proximity to an urban market.

The rise of a comparatively well-to-do class of peasant farmers was accompanied by an increase in the class of peasants with little or no land, who depended for the whole or most of their livelihood on selling their labour : for the removal of restrictions on the sale of land allowed the richer peasants to enlarge their farms by buying the allotments of their poorer fellows, who in increasing numbers were becoming landless agricultural or industrial labourers. When war broke out, the changes already beginning to be noticeable in agricultural

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economy were also having reactions in different degrees on other sections of the population. Thus the increasing demand by the more prosperous section of the peasant population for manufactured goods was stimulating industry and creating employment for at least a part of the surplus peasant population. At the same time the increasing urban and industrial population, recruited from the surplus peasantry, required more food, and the market for the peasants' foodstuffs expanded, with a general tendency for prices to rise.

Though a steadily increasing number of peasant freehold proprietors were improving both their standard of farming and standard of living, and in the process earning the title of kulak, the standards of the average and poorer peasants were certainly not improving, and in fact had probably declined, since the 80's of the last century. For this the main reason was overpopulation, especially in the Central Agricultural Provinces and the Ukraine. The growth of peasant population had resulted in continual subdivision of farms ; thus, while in 1878 only 10·6 per cent of peasant holdings of nadiel land were less than 5 dessiatini (13·5 acres), in 1905 23·3 per cent were below this standard and the total number of holdings had increased from 9·4 to 12·3 millions. All peasants, except the comparatively few kulaks, lacked capital and were forced to continue a primitive type of maintenance farming that had not altered since the days of Peter the Great. In all grain-growing regions the old three-field rotation was still the normal practice, which meant that roughly one-third of the arable land was always lying idle or providing merely rough

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pasturage for cattle, which only too often were underbred and undernourished. Peasant households possessing only a small *nadiel* were compelled, in order to live, either to hire additional land or to send some of their members out to work for wages. Because of the superfluity of agricultural labour, wages were low; temporary hands engaged for the harvest earned from 40 to 60 kopeks (about half a rouble \*) a day in the Northern and Central Governments and somewhat more in the southern steppes, while permanent farm hands on yearly contract earned less than R.100 a year. In the towns the standard wage for builders, etc., was a rouble a day. For the same reason, the rent of arable land was high. When paid in kind it took up to one-half the crop grown, and when paid in money it was equivalent to the value of about half the crop. In actual fact, the peasant who hired land probably worked harder and got no more from it than if he had cultivated it for the owner as a hired labourer. The overpopulation of the agricultural districts was vividly illustrated during the War. In 1916, when about 40 per cent of the able-bodied male peasants were in the Army and some 2·6 million horses had been taken from agriculture for military purposes, farming operations were perfectly efficiently carried on by those who remained, assisted by the old men, women and youths below the age of military service. The total area sown to crops declined by 6 per cent only compared

\* The pre-War exchange value of the rouble was 2s. 1d. In purchasing power over manufactured goods, such as the peasant required, it was worth no more than, if as much as, 2s. in the U.K. Thus, for purposes of comparison, R.100 might be given the equivalence of £10.

with 1913, while the quantity of all livestock, except horses, increased very considerably compared with 1914. The reason was that, owing to the cessation of exports and the increasing difficulty of transporting grain by rail from one part of the country to another, the peasants found themselves with a surplus of foodstuffs, which they very prudently employed in feeding stock.

At the outbreak of the War the agricultural population over the greater part of European Russia had increased to such an extent that, under existing conditions, the land in peasant occupation was insufficient to give full employment and a tolerable standard of living to the whole mass of peasants. The peasants themselves thought that the remedy was to give them land belonging to the State and private owners. According to the survey of 1905, out of a total of 1067 million acres in 50 Governments of European Russia the peasant nadiel land amounted to 375 million acres, State land to 418 million acres and private estates to 274 million acres, the last including 36 million acres owned by peasants. Of the rest of the land in private ownership a large part was leased by peasants, who paid a total annual rent of R.289 million. Obviously, all cultivated land gave employment to peasants, therefore to distribute all the State and private land among the peasants would not have increased the amount of employment, though it would have improved the lot of the peasants by the amount of the rent paid and the income derived by the former owners from farming their own land. The peasants, of course, did not see any necessity to indemnify the former owners

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for the loss of their land, or rather they had the naïve idea that the Tsar could indemnify them from some vague but inexhaustible fund of his own. A large increase in the area of land in actual cultivation was impracticable. It might have been possible to drain considerable areas of marshland, which in time would have made good arable land, but from an agricultural and economic point of view the clearing of forest land and ploughing-up of pasture would have been a mistake. As a matter of fact, in the Central Agricultural Provinces, where the rural population was densest, the proportion of pasture land to arable land was already too low in private estates as well as in peasant farms.

The alternative to increasing the area of land under extensive agriculture was to introduce intensive methods of farming. By adopting a scientific rotation of crops, the necessity for leaving about one-third of the arable land fallow would have been avoided, and this alone would have increased the total area under crops by about one-third. At the same time, by employing better machinery and implements, particularly by deep and thorough ploughing and the application of fertilisers, the yield of the land could be greatly increased. The famous Russian black earth is among the best grain soil in the world, but under the primitive farming of the peasants the average Russian wheat yield in the years 1909-13 was only 10·8 bushels an acre compared with 33·8 bushels in Germany. At the same time, the peasant population in the Central Agricultural Provinces of Russia was one to every 1·8 acres compared with a rural population of one to 2·8 acres in Germany.

But it was out of the question to attempt to improve farming science and methods among millions of small-holders without any capital and without the means to accumulate capital. It is true that the zemstvos did their best to interest the peasants in better farming methods by providing agricultural experts to advise on farming methods, and by assisting them with credit to obtain better implements, but these efforts did not touch the root of the problem. The only effective solution of the problem was to make possible the rise of a class of large peasant or peasant-yeoman farmers with sufficient land to enable them to accumulate capital and adopt more up-to-date methods. And this meant the amalgamation of the former multitude of small-holdings into a much smaller number of larger and more economic farms. It was not to be expected that such a far-reaching reform of the whole basis of rural economy could be effected without some friction. The poorer sections of the peasantry had grave misgivings that they were not only benefiting in no way, but were even prejudiced by the new alignments. And they were quite right, especially in the densely populated and purely agricultural regions, where, if farming were to be rationalised, the poorest peasants would eventually have to give up their uneconomically small farms and become mere wage-earners. It was well within the bounds of possibility that as permanent farm labourers or as industrial wage-earners these peasants would eventually be better off than they were as small-holders, eking out a miserable existence by taking seasonal employment. But the peasant who found himself com-

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pelled, by circumstances which he did not fully understand, to part with his few acres and the last shadow of his economic independence, did not stop to think whether the loss might not be to his ultimate advantage. He was merely conscious of a grievance against the Government which was primarily responsible for the new order of things, and a grudge against his better-to-do fellows to whom the new order gave visible opportunities of still further betterment.

## CHAPTER IX

### PEASANT FARMING DURING THE WAR

WHEN war broke out in 1914 the great mass of peasants were still far from contented with their economic situation. It would have needed a much longer time than had elapsed since 1906 to create an effective class of economically satisfied and politically stable peasant proprietors. But for a couple of years the effects of the War were in some ways favourable to the peasant economy. Although the export of grain practically ceased, internal prices of farm produce did not fall, as was expected, but steadily rose. And since a large proportion of the best peasant workers had been "called up", the remainder were more fully occupied and there were fewer mouths to feed. Wages also increased because, for the first time in history, the demand for labour by the large farmers and landowners exceeded the supply. Finally, the families of soldiers received separation allowances. The peasants, therefore, were in receipt of more money than ever before. Their gratification was, however, mitigated by the increasing inability of money to buy the things they wanted. The War had, of course, stopped the importation of consumers' goods. After the entry of Turkey into the War the only inlets were through the White Sea, frozen for six months of the year, the Far East, or by land through Norway, Sweden and Finland, and these routes

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were inadequate to maintain the supply of munitions, let alone allow for imports of consumers' goods. All industrial enterprises that could be converted into munition works were so converted, and a large proportion of consumption industries such as textiles were manufacturing for Army needs and not for the consuming public.

As a result of these conditions the countryside became flooded with paper money, and owing to the prohibition of the sale of alcohol the peasants were unable to use it to buy even vodka. Incidentally this caused an appreciable decrease in the number of village fires and an increase in the productivity of peasant labour. The net outcome was that the agricultural population consumed more and sold less of its production. The percentage of all kinds of grain and fodder crops marketed fell from 12.4 per cent in 1909-13 to 7.4 per cent in 1915. It is generally considered that pre-War grain exports were largely at the expense of peasant consumption, and if it is too much to say that the bulk of the peasant population in the most densely populated grain-producing regions were consistently undernourished, it is certainly true that they could have consumed a good deal more food with advantage. Thus, during the War agricultural output did not fall, as it would almost certainly have done had it been organised more for the market and less for home consumption. On the other hand, there was little inducement for the peasants to produce more than before the War. In the majority of cases they probably ploughed and sowed just about as much as they had been accustomed to, for it was only in rather exceptional circumstances that

the inertia of habit was interrupted by extraneous events.

According to figures published in 1917, the area under crops in European Russia, excluding Finland and Poland, was as follows :

1914	.	.	101·7	million dessiatini
1915	.	.	95·7	„ „
1916	.	.	90·6	„ „

But it must be remembered that a varying but considerable area of Western Russia was more or less in the war zone. In the second place, it was calculated that, mainly owing to the shortage of labour, the landed gentry reduced their sowings from 21·8 million dessiatini in 1914 to 10·2 million in 1915 and 6·5 million in 1916. It is therefore apparent that the peasants increased their crop area during the first two years of the War, and it is probable that the area sown for the 1917 harvest also showed an increase over 1916. The Tsar's abdication in February 1917 and the advent of the Provisional Government was accompanied by confusion in the country districts caused by the peasants' seizure of private estates, and any sort of agricultural statistics relating to that year must be at least doubtful.

The War also had a certain effect on the nature of the crops grown. In former days when the Russian peasant grew crops almost entirely for his own use, he planted grain, potatoes, vegetables and fodder crops. In course of time Russian agriculture became increasingly based on a market economy and the proportion of land under grain declined in relation to land planted with sugar beet, flax and other so-called industrial crops with

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a relatively high market value. The War reduced the market for some agricultural raw material, and the increasing worthlessness of paper currency lessened the stimulus to grow any sort of crops for the market alone. The general tendency, therefore, was for the area under crops for home consumption to expand at the cost of crops for the market. There was, for instance, a higher proportion of rye to wheat than before the War, because rye had always been grown by peasants for their own use, while wheat was regarded more as a market crop. The decline in the production of industrial and marketable produce became especially marked in 1917, because by then the pre-War stocks of manufactured consumers' goods were practically exhausted and the inflationary expansion of the currency had made the peasants distrustful of money that could not immediately be converted into goods.

Mention has already been made of the rise in prices during the War. In the autumn of 1915 the Government decided to fix prices of grain in order to facilitate procuring supplies for the Army. These fixed prices represented the maximum paid by the Government to the growers, who were not precluded from selling to private buyers at higher prices. But the Government assumed the right of buying whatever grain it required under compulsion, and if supplies were withheld they could be requisitioned at a price 15 per cent below the fixed price. In the autumn of 1916 the Government introduced fixed grain prices for the whole of the grain trade. The prices, however, were fixed too low and the peasants showed reluctance to sell.

In November 1916 compulsory levies of grain and fodder for the Army were introduced, to be paid for at the fixed price. Premiums were payable to all growers delivering their quotas by 6th January 1917; in spite of this, only 23 million puds out of the expected 515 millions had been procured by that date. Thus, before the Revolution, the peasants showed the same distaste of compulsory deliveries of produce as they showed even more emphatically to Soviet requisitions.

The general results of the War on peasant economy may be summed up as follows :

A decline in the standard of farming, owing to a variety of reasons, including increasing difficulty in procuring farm machinery, etc., and the retrogression from a fairly rapidly growing money economy to a more primitive natural economy.

A much more marked degeneration of large-scale farming by the landowning gentry, in consequence of which a considerable area of privately owned land went out of cultivation.

A disorganisation of the market and a consequent decrease in private trade, resulting in the different parts of the country being thrown much more than before on their own resources. This meant that the difference in regional prices became much more marked. And this had, as a further consequence, the rise of a class of enterprising dealers or speculators in the grain trade.

Before the War, Russia had exported annually some 9 or 10 million tons of grain, about half the marketable surplus remaining after the needs of

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the rural population had been covered. The withdrawal of this quantity from the world market was a contributing factor to a rise in world grain prices and a rapid expansion of wheat production in Canada, the U.S.A., etc. But in spite of the fact that during the first two years of the War the decline in Russian grain production was far from compensating for the loss of export,\* there was no glut on the internal market, and in 1917 a food shortage appeared in the towns. The Army ration included about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lb. a day of cereals in the form of bread, meal and flour, which was considerably more than the average soldier could afford to eat in private life, which is only another proof that the average peasant did not eat to satiety.

\* Decline in cereal production during War years :

Average for 1909-13	(In millions of tons)			
	1914	1915	1916	1917
70.0	67.2	68.5	57.4	55.3

Decline in cereal exports during War years :

Average for 1909-13	(In millions of tons.)			
	1914	1915	1916	1917
10.5	5.5	0.5	0.6	0.02

## CHAPTER X

### THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

THE War had not seriously increased the active unrest among the peasants, as it had among the industrial urban population, which was directly touched by the food shortage and was in a position to perceive the corruption in Government circles and the weak and vacillating policy of the rulers. But the War certainly did nothing to alleviate the latent discontent among the peasants. The abdication of the Tsar and the formation of the Lvov Government in March 1917 resulted in the disintegration of governmental authority in the villages. The members of the new Government consisted largely of socialists and reformers of varying shades of pink, who, like nearly all Russian reformers, were more disposed to speech than action. On principle they believed in communal land tenure and the expropriation of large landowners and the breaking up of their estates. But they shirked the responsibility of positive measures to put their policy into action, and were content with decreeing the formation of land committees in every volost, district and province, in addition to a Central Land Committee for the whole country. These committees were to prepare the way for new land reforms and draft provisional measures pending the settlement of the land question by the Constituent Assembly. Neither the constitution

nor the method of electing or appointing the members of the land committees were clearly defined, and their terms of reference were extremely vague. Consequently the committees did pretty well what they liked; that is, if they functioned at all. The peasants, however, had firmly grasped one thing, that they were to have the land belonging to private estates. And they proceeded to annex the land. At first they acted with restraint; peasants who had leased land simply stopped paying rent, while peasant communities pastured their cattle on private meadows and cut wood in private forests.

As soon as it became known among the soldiers and sailors that land was to be had for the taking, thousands deserted and returned to their villages to claim their share before it was too late. The fact that they were able to desert with impunity showed the breakdown of discipline in the Army and Navy. The deserters were, naturally, in a more truculent and revolutionary frame of mind than the peasants at home and, inflamed by the propaganda of the professional revolutionaries, began a persecution of the landowning gentry. Many country houses were burnt, and a large number of country squires and the agents or managers of large estates belonging to absentee nobles were atrociously murdered. It was by no means always the case that the victims were personally unpopular with the peasants. As a matter of fact a large proportion of the biggest landowners had always followed a tradition, dating back to serfdom, of helping the peasants to improve their conditions and supporting them in times of scarcity. But it made little difference whether a landowner had

been a good neighbour and landlord or had exploited the peasants' necessities by advance hirings\* and extortionate rents. Landowners were historically enemies of the peasants and must be destroyed on principle. The fury against the landowners extended to their possessions, and much valuable property, including even things that were of obvious value to the peasants, such as farm machinery and animals, were senselessly destroyed. When the Provisional Government at last woke up to the fact that the whole countryside was in a turmoil that threatened seriously to reduce spring crop sowings for the coming harvest, it was too late to take any effective action.

Long before the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917 brought the Provisional Government to an ignominious and unlamented end, private ownership of land had been abolished. This applied not only to the gentry and non-peasant landowners, but to a large part of the peasant proprietors who had become freeholders of their own farms. As was stated above, the political tenets of narodnik and social revolutionary members of the Provisional Government favoured communal land tenure. When the land question was acute in the early years of the century they, and those of like socialist tint, had advocated the breaking up of large estates among the peasant communes without altering the form of peasant tenure. They viewed the reforms

\* Poor peasants whose resources were insufficient to tide them through the winter were compelled by their own necessities to sell their labour in the coming summer against an immediate advance of wages in money or kind. The rate at which these advances were made was considerably under the normal rate of wages ruling at the time the labour was performed.

giving peasants the opportunity of becoming sole and individual proprietors of their own land as an anti-social measure calculated to increase the power and extent of capitalism on the land. The Bolshevik agitators, already active but as yet irresponsible, encouraged the so-called *Chorny Peredel* (black, i.e. unauthorised and often violent redistribution of the land) because the resulting disturbances embarrassed the Provisional Government and simultaneously brought the peasants over to their side. Their real programme was nationalisation and the creation of large centrally controlled State farms, but to have shown their hand at the time would have turned the peasants against them. In any case the Bolsheviks had not worked out the details of their land policy, and since the social revolutionaries were getting the support of the villages in the elections to the Constitutional Assembly, Lenin decided to outbid them with his slogan of *grab nagrablyennoe* (loot that which was looted).

Among the earlier decrees of the Provincial Government was an Act published in May 1917 abolishing the land settlement committees and suspending the application of the Land Settlement Act of 1911. All sales of land were prohibited, activities of the Peasant Bank were suspended and the land held by the Bank was taken over by the Government for eventual redistribution. It remained for the peasants themselves to reverse the Stolypin reforms and restore pre-reform conditions. In most places where peasants had seceded from the commune and established themselves as independent farmers in hutors or otrubs, their land was

forcibly reintegrated in the commune and, together with any new land annexed from neighbouring estates, redistributed among the members of the commune on the old principles, in accordance with the old narodnik teaching, though not in accordance with the Bolsheviks' policy. In some cases owners of hutors were forced to return to the village, and in a few places the owners of hutors and even of otrubs were treated as private landowners and dispossessed of their property without receiving the right to a share in the communal land. In many places where whole communes had been dissolved and all the land made over into enclosed farms, the peasants voluntarily returned to the old system and redistributed the pooled land. In the north and western regions of the country, where individual and heritable peasant farms had existed for a long time before the Stolypin reforms, and where the communal system of land tenure had never been so universal as in the centre, south and east, freehold peasant farms were often specifically exempted from general distribution. As a general rule, the agrarian revolution was much less violent and intense in those regions where land-hunger was less acute and where there were fewer large estates. It was, naturally, in the overpopulated and intensely agricultural regions that the peasant reactions to the Revolution were most violent.

Since we are discussing the economic condition of the peasants rather than their political rôle in the Revolution, the question of chief interest is what the peasants gained by the Revolution. Certainly they got possession of a great deal of land which was closed to them before, or which

they occupied as tenants. But they made little use of it. It was not until 1925 that the total area under cultivation regained pre-War level. Owing to the shortage, or rather complete lack of manufactured consumers' goods, the inflationary depreciation of the currency and the disorganisation of transport, private trade had almost ceased and the Government was compelled to resort to requisitioning grain to feed the urban population and the Army. Consequently the peasants got less than ever for their surplus produce: in fact, they got nothing. And this very seriously detracted from their joy in at last obtaining possession of the land they honestly thought they had been wrongly deprived of since the emancipation. Of course they no longer paid any rent, nor interest on bank loans, and possibly those who possessed foresight and some financial sense repaid all their liabilities with depreciated roubles. But the Russian peasant was a very different creature from the German peasant. The latter took full advantage of the mark inflation to pay off his mortgages and then repair his farm buildings and erect new ones. The possibilities of a monetary inflation must have been quite beyond the understanding of the average Russian moujik, and since money still played a relatively subsidiary part in his economy, neither the advantages nor disadvantages of a currency inflation vitally affected him. In any case, the whole situation in the country districts soon became so chaotic that nobody thought of paying off debts, and those who possessed money found that all they had were bits of paper.

The most immediately significant effect of the

Revolution on peasant economy was the reversal of the process of differentiation. Poor peasants who had previously had to earn a large part of their subsistence by working for others found themselves again possessed of land, and those who had raised themselves above the ruck were reduced to the level of the ordinary peasant.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION AND THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

THE collapse of the Kerensky Government and the succession to power of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in November 1917 made very little immediate difference to the peasants. The Bolsheviks had, by advocating the stoppage of the War and a general demobilisation, secured the support of the soldiers, which gave them the undisputed mastery of the situation and enabled them to dissolve the Constituent Assembly after its first meeting. But since their hands were completely full with organising their administration in the urban centres, and because they could not afford to do anything to alienate the peasants, for the time being they left the latter alone. Thus the Narodnik agrarian policy was adopted in its main principles, and one of the old Narodniki, Professor A. N. Oganovski, remained the real head of the Commissariat of Agriculture up to 1928. The Bolsheviks' attitude was also influenced by their recognition of the fact that victory in the civil war would eventually go to that side that unconditionally capitulated to the peasants' demand for the distribution of all the available agricultural land. In February 1918 the Bolsheviks issued a decree under which the peasants were granted the use of all lands formerly belonging to landowners, the Crown and the State, the Church, etc. All

dealings in land were forbidden and the principle of equality in distribution was officially upheld. The only land not handed over to the peasants was that occupied by collective farms and State farms, and these together accounted for less than 4 per cent of the total area of agricultural land. In all the peasants received about 135 million acres of land, but the greater part was already occupied by them as tenants.

Before the Revolution peasant farms of all sorts numbered some 18 millions. In 1919 there were over 20 million separate peasant farms and in 1923 over 22 millions. Very many peasants who had been agricultural labourers became possessed of land; thus between 1917 and 1919 the proportion of landless peasant households fell from 11·6 to 6·6 per cent. At the other end of the scale, the proportion of peasant farms over 27 acres in total area fell from 5 to 1·6 per cent. The equalisation of peasant holdings extended also to horses; in 1917, 28·9 per cent of peasant farms were horseless, in 1919, 25·1 per cent, but the proportion of farms with only one horse increased from 47·6 to 60·1 per cent, and the proportion of farms with two or more horses fell from 23·5 to 14·8 per cent.

Statistics compiled during the early days of the Revolution must necessarily be of very doubtful accuracy, if only because most of the country was at different times overrun by the Red and White armies, not to mention the occupation of large areas in Western Russia and the Ukraine by German troops. But they serve to show the general trend of development in the countryside. Although it suited the Bolsheviks for the time being to tolerate

the process of equalisation and the numerical increase in peasant farms, they were only indirectly responsible for this movement. First of all, there was a shift to the land of numbers of industrial workers, soldiers, sailors and others who had not lost connection with their village homes. The towns were short of food, employment was falling and land on which an existence could be supported was to be had for nothing. Secondly, the large estates that had employed agricultural labour were broken up, and in any case it was illegal for private farmers, including peasants, to employ hired labour. Peasants who had previously earned their living as agricultural wage-earners therefore became small-holders. Thirdly, because of the prohibition of employing hired labour and because the lack of markets made the production of a marketable surplus a mere waste of time and trouble, the larger peasant farmers reduced their cultivation to an area just sufficient for their own personal needs. The net result, as far as the whole country was concerned, was that the total area of land under crops declined and the average yield of the land deteriorated, because the small farmer with one poor horse, primitive implements and no money to buy artificial fertilisers, even had there been any to buy, was quite incapable of maintaining even the very mediocre standard of farming of the average pre-War peasant.

The fall in the volume of foodstuffs grown meant a fall in the marketable surplus; even peasants who had a surplus were disinclined to sell, because they could not buy anything with their money. The Bolsheviks were compelled not only to continue

the Provisional Government's grain monopoly, but to increase the severity of requisitions. It was decreed that all peasants must surrender to the State all their grain in excess of a very modest norm to cover their own requirements. Nominally they were to receive in exchange a sufficient quantity of manufactured goods to satisfy their needs. Money was to be abolished and the exchange of the peasants' food for the proletariat's factory-made goods was to be carried out by the State. This was the essence of Lenin's *smychka* (literally the linking together of complementary parts), in which he believed that the peasants and workers would be equally satisfied with their bargain. As a matter of fact, Lenin seems to have thought that the mutual and harmonious co-operation of the peasants and workers in supplying the others' needs was one of the prime elements in the eventual success of the Bolshevik experiment. However, the Government was unable to carry out the whole programme, because it had very little in the way of manufactured goods to send into the villages. But the peasants had to part with their grain just the same. This experience went a long way towards disillusioning the peasants: as serfs they had a saying, "The land is ours, but we are our landlords'"; to the Bolsheviks they said, || "The land is now ours, but the crops are yours". The lack of manufactured goods compelled the peasants to return to their traditional cottage handicrafts, which had been falling into disuse before the War owing to the rapid expansion in the supply of cheap factory-made commodities.

As a consequence of War Communism (as the

Bolsheviks' attempt to organise direct distribution without the use of money was called) the peasants further reduced their cultivation: they purposely produced only enough food for their own immediate consumption, and not only did not try to realise a marketable surplus but refrained from producing a reserve because it would have been taken away by the Government. There was a severe drought in 1920, which on top of the reduced sowings caused a terrible famine, in which millions of people died. This ended what might be called the first trial of strength between the peasants and the Bolsheviks. It was not conclusive, but on the whole the peasants gained a slight advantage at tremendous cost. Lenin was compelled to reverse his policy of War Communism and readmit private trading.

The peasants' victory resulted in the New Economic Policy (afterwards known as N.E.P.) which Lenin announced in March 1921. The main feature was the reduction of the peasants' compulsory deliveries of grain from the whole of their surplus to a fixed quantity. After fulfilling their obligations to the State, the peasants might deal with the rest of their crops as they thought fit. The Government, of course, intended that the peasants should sell food to the townspeople, since the attempt to make them give it to the Government had failed disastrously. If buying and selling were to be reintroduced money was necessary, and if the peasants were to accept money they must be able to buy something with it. The Government therefore revived the moribund rouble and as soon as practicable issued a new stable currency, and simultaneously allowed private traders to buy and

2) sell goods on the open market. Also, since State industry was producing next to no consumers' goods, private enterprise was tolerated in small-scale industry and allowed to employ a limited amount of labour. The Government, however, retained in its own hands the commanding heights, such as the monopoly of foreign trade, railway and water transport, banking and credit and, of course, all large-scale industrial enterprises, which, having been nationalised at the very beginning of the Revolution, continued under the management of State trusts. Private enterprise was thus kept in subjection.

Whether Lenin's intention was to revoke N.E.P. as soon as State organisations could be created to take charge of distribution, is not certain. The latest Soviet history definitely states that N.E.P. was never intended to be anything but a very temporary concession to the ignorance and prejudice of the people, who were incapable of the self-denial and altruism demanded by pure communism. In any event, it caused the first important schism in the Communist Party, the uncompromisingly extremist wing holding that it was a surrender and a betrayal of communism, while the more moderate section apparently welcomed it as a permanent retreat from an untenable position. Although Lenin allowed his followers a certain amount of liberty in debate, he tolerated no real opposition to his policy, and in the purge that followed N.E.P. about 25 per cent of the Party members were expelled.

The effect of N.E.P. on peasant agriculture was immediate. In 1922 only 158 million acres were

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planted, nearly 100 million less than in 1913 ; in 1923 the area increased to 205 million acres, in 1924 to 217 millions and by 1927 it reached 236 millions. But this was still below 1913. The increase in the quantity of livestock was also considerable, as shown by the following table :

	(In Million Head)	
	1922	1925
Horses . . .	24·1	27·1
Cattle . . .	45·8	62·1
Sheep and goats . . .	91·1	122·9
Pigs . . .	12·1	21·8

Although private trade in food and manufactured goods was now legal, the quantity of goods coming on to the open market was necessarily very small compared with that before the War. Industry was producing not more than one-third of its pre-War volume, and imports of consumption goods were practically suspended. It is unlikely that the average peasant's money turnover in 1921 was half what it had been in 1914. The Government collected a large part of the peasants' surplus production as a tax in kind, and this satisfied a considerable part of the urban demand ; therefore it was necessary for the non-agricultural population to provide goods in exchange for the balance of their requirements only. It was calculated that during the early years of N.E.P. the peasants were able to obtain in exchange for a given quantity of foodstuffs less than one-half the quantity of industrial goods they had received before the War.

Although, as we have already seen, the Bolsheviks' agrarian policy was originally founded on

State ownership and large centrally controlled farms, they were compelled for the time being to continue the old form of peasant land tenure. But the Soviet Government tried to encourage collective farming by giving special assistance to groups of people prepared to form joint farming enterprises. A certain number of former industrial workers and landless peasants with no capital of their own to start farming took advantage of the Government's offer to provide stock and credit and established collective farms on land allotted them from State land and large estates. In some places groups of poor peasants owning small farms voluntarily merged their separate holdings into collective farms in order to obtain Government assistance; but in many cases these collective farms were merely pretence and there was no real pooling of property. The fluidity of collectivisation in the early days is shown by the following figures :

Type of Collective *	July 1918	Sept. 1919	Sept. 1920	March 1921	Dec 1922
Communes .	342	1,961	1,892	2,114	1,672
Artels .	..	3,603	7,722	11,136	8,130
Associations .	..	622	886	1,356	1,605
Total .	342	6,186	10,500	14,606	11,407

\* The commune was formed by the complete pooling of all resources and property, and the members lived a communal life in communal buildings.

In the artel the members retained their own houses, small garden plots and some livestock and lived separately, but pooled the land and working stock and shared in the proceeds of the joint farming.

In associations the members co-operated in cultivating the arable land, but all property remained in private possession.

Generally speaking, the communal type of farm was founded by members of the urban proletariat, while the genuine peasants preferred the comparative freedom of the artel or association. A number

of collective farms were also formed by members of monasteries and ecclesiastical foundations and religious sects. The total membership of collective farms at the beginning of 1922 was just over one million, or some 1.4 per cent of the whole agricultural population.

As the figures show, collectivisation was increasingly popular up to the beginning of 1921 and then declined after the introduction of N.E.P., the reason being that during War Communism collective farms were treated rather more liberally than independent peasants, having to deliver proportionately less grain and being given preference in the distribution of manufactured goods. Immediately private enterprise and individual economic liberty were reinstated many collective farms were liquidated, their members starting afresh as individual farmers. Another important reason for the decline of collective farms was the Government's action in handing over local village affairs to committees of poor peasants. This was in full accord with the Bolshevik principle of putting the under-dog on top. On the whole it was not a success. The poor peasants, who quite obviously had no surplus to spare from their own small-holdings, were delighted with the opportunity of getting their own back on their richer neighbours and promptly assessed their deliveries of grain at impossible quantities. The Bolsheviks were eventually compelled to realise that the lowest strata of society, whose champions they affected to be, were the lowest principally because they lacked the intelligence and will to rise. The early attempts to delegate the control of village affairs and the

administration of enterprises to committees of poor peasants and workers showed that they were apt to abuse their power. Even to-day the Government's and Party's considered measures for economic efficiency and social betterment are often vitiated through the lack of intelligence, honesty and disinterestedness among local executives. While the Bolsheviks' sympathy with the poor and oppressed is ethically commendable, the assumption that the poor form the best element in the community is scarcely confirmed by the experience of the Revolution.

While N.E.P. stopped any further deterioration in agriculture, the mere permission to trade provided a very slight inducement to the peasants to expand their output. Taxation was heavy ; it was estimated that in 1923 the peasants had to yield by way of taxation about 10·5 per cent of their gross production compared with about 8·2 per cent, including rent of leased land and interest on loans, before the War. At the same time the money obtained by the sale of their marketable surplus had less than half the purchasing power of the pre-War rouble.

In 1924 peasant taxation was placed on a monetary basis. The Government was still the chief purchaser of grain and was able to fix its own prices, and the prices actually paid were very little higher than pre-War. Both the quantity of grain bought and the yield of peasant taxes fell below the estimates ; and the Government had to admit that its peasant policy was leading nowhere. In the first place, the peasants' marketable surplus was less than before the War because production

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was less while the rural population was, if anything, larger. To some extent this was compensated by the smaller urban population, which required less food, but the restoration of industry was beginning to draw people back to the towns from the country. This would tend to reduce the consumption of the agricultural population, but as peasant consumption of food was less than pre-War, there was a margin to make up before the real marketable surplus increased. In the second place, the artificially provoked class struggle in the villages, together with the enforced equalisation of peasant property, prevented the more industrious and energetic peasants from trying to produce a marketable surplus. Under War Communism the principle had been for the village Soviet to collect a quantity of grain for delivery to the Government and to distribute the manufactured goods, if any, received in exchange among the villagers according to their needs. This was in complete accord with the original communist slogan, "From each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs"; the more land the individual peasant had, the more grain he had to contribute to the village's quota, but when it came to the share-out of manufactured goods, he received less than the poor peasant who possibly had not contributed any grain at all. Of course this system ended with the introduction of private trading and individual money taxes, but the memory of it still acted as a deterrent to the more enterprising peasants.

In 1924 the Government changed its entire attitude. It suddenly decided that the hard-working and intelligent peasant, who had yesterday

been a kulak, was an honest and thrifty farmer, the backbone of the country and a worthy citizen. It is also probable that the poor peasants were beginning to find that their class war against the kulaks was an unprofitable diversion. They had earned part of their living at least by working for these same kulaks and now there was nobody to give them employment. They were therefore not altogether opposed to the Government's new policy, allowing peasants to rent land from other peasants and hire labour. The result was an appreciable increase in the size of farms ; in the two important grain-growing regions of North Caucasus and Ukraine the percentage of farms with over 16 acres of arable land increased respectively from 33·1 to 40·8 and from 19·3 to 24·7. The grain harvest suddenly increased from 57·4 million tons in 1924 to 72·5 million tons in 1925. It is true that 1925 was a better harvest year than 1924, but the average harvest for the three years 1922-24 was only some 53 million tons compared with an average of 74 millions for the following three years. The Government also permitted, and even assisted, individual peasants to obtain agricultural machinery, and thus readmitted the principle of private ownership of capital in agriculture.

## CHAPTER XII

### REDIFFERENTIATION OF THE PEASANTS AND THE END OF N.E.P.

THE reversal of the Bolsheviks' agrarian policy soon resulted in the peasants again becoming differentiated into rich, middle and poor. The term rich must not be taken literally; a so-called rich peasant was merely less poverty-stricken than a middle peasant. During the first half of the N.E.P. period even the richest peasants produced mainly for their own needs and only marketed sufficient to pay their taxes and buy a few essential manufactured goods. In 1913, out of a total area of 94.4 million hectares planted with grain 31.7 million, or about 33.6 per cent, was sown to wheat; during N.E.P. the area sown to wheat and the proportion of land under wheat to total grain cultivation was as follows :

	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928
Total area under grain .	66.2	78.6	82.9	87.3	93.7	94.7	92.2
Area under wheat .	14.4	18.4	22.0	24.9	29.4	31.2	27.7
Percentage of wheat to total grain .	21.7	23.5	26.5	28.5	31.4	33.4	30.0

Now wheat was always a market crop with the Russian peasant, while rye was mainly grown for

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home consumption. Before the War roughly half of the marketed wheat was exported and grain was the largest single item in Russia's total exports. The Soviet Government revived the export of grain in 1922, and during the following years of N.E.P. grain exports became again fairly important, though they never even approached the pre-War average of some 8 to 10 million tons. The revival of export was accompanied by renewed imports, as shown by the following figures :

	1923-24	1924-25 *	1925-26	1926-27	1927-28
<i>Exports of grain (in thousands of tons)</i>	2,661	599	2,069	2,178	344
<i>Imports (in millions of roubles) :</i>					
<i>Manufactured consumers' goods .</i>	17.2	23.6	70.1	18.7	4.8
<i>Agricultural machinery, etc. .</i>	12.2	41.7	59.4	31.5	44.9

\* 1924 was a poor harvest year in which the average grain yield per hectare was 17 per cent below the normal. In a normal year the genuine marketable surplus was about 20 per cent of the peasants' gross harvest.

Evidently the peasants got some return for the produce they sold to the Government and on the open market; enough, at any rate, to stimulate the planting of market crops such as wheat, cotton and sugar beet. The area sown to the two last-named reached the pre-War level in 1926 or 1927. By 1927 the total area under cultivation and the gross quantity of crops harvested had about regained the pre-War level, though grain production was still below the pre-War average. The net marketable surplus, however, was not much more than one-

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third pre-War. For one thing, the rural population had increased from an estimated 114·6 millions at the beginning of 1914 to 121·3 millions, according to the census taken in December 1926 ; for another thing the peasants were consuming a larger proportion of their own produce. Since the prices of manufactured goods remained very high in comparison with the prices paid to the peasants for foodstuffs, the peasant farmer preferred consuming to satisfaction to restricting his consumption in order to buy, in his own opinion, a quite disproportionately small quantity of manufactured goods. The high cost of bought goods also stimulated village industry, and a considerable part of the industrial crops such as flax and wool, that had formerly been sold to the industries, was retained in the villages and manufactured by handicraft workers. Incidentally an appreciable quantity of grain was used to make *samogonka* (home-distilled spirit). Before the War private distilleries were illegal and the vodka sold by the State spirit monopoly was both good and cheap. During the War the sale of vodka was suspended and the peasants took to making *samogonka*, which they could do with comparative immunity owing to the relaxing of authority in the countryside. The Bolsheviks, of course, also made private stills illegal, but their control was not difficult to evade.

In the latter half of N.E.P. village life had returned to something very like pre-War conditions. The larger peasant farmers employed the poor and landless peasants, and the middle peasants just about managed to subsist on their own holdings without external sources of income, though

many of them performed so many days' work on a richer peasant's land in return for the loan of a team, perhaps together with a plough or cart, at ploughing and harvesting time. The Bolsheviks have created a somewhat exaggerated picture of the kulak as a ruthless usurer and exploiter of his poorer neighbours. The kulak was a kulak because he was more intelligent and enterprising and a better business man than the average peasant, and no doubt he generally made a good bargain for himself; but there was always a good deal of mutual assistance and give-and-take among all classes in the village community. The poor peasant was usually poor because he was stupid and thriftless, not because he was exploited and kept down by the kulak. During the peasant risings in 1905-6 and during the life of the Provisional Government after the March revolution, the peasants destroyed and seized the property of the landed nobility and gentry but certainly did not make a dead set against the kulaks as a class. It was only when the Bolsheviks opened their campaign of agitation and incited the poorer peasants to a class war that they began a systematic persecution of their richer neighbours. In 1924, when the Soviet Government was compelled by its own needs to relax its restrictive policy against peasant enterprise, the class struggles soon waned. It was only natural that the poor peasants should have been envious and possibly mildly antagonistic to the richer peasants, but it seems that it required some external impulse to convert this latent antagonism into open conflict.

In actual fact the peasants when left alone showed the rudiments of class solidarity, and, rather

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to the Bolsheviks' chagrin, the middle peasants began to range themselves alongside the rich peasants against the rural proletariat. The Bolsheviks had counted on the middle and poor peasants still combining to restrain the richer peasants from becoming too rich and from regaining their old influence and standing in the village community. But it became quite clear that the middle peasants were not at all attracted by the communist way of life; in fact, they preferred retaining their own individualities and the prospect of bettering themselves by their own efforts to sinking their individualities in collective enterprise. Certainly the "model" State farms and the majority of the collective farms were not good advertisements for the mode of life extolled by Bolshevism. The standard of living of the peasants working in these institutions was no higher than that of the average independent middle peasant. Practically the only genuine supporters of Bolshevik ideas in the villages were the very poor and landless peasants; that is, the rural proletariat, who, possessing nothing except their labour, had nothing to lose.

Although the peasants were comparatively content and tolerant towards the Soviet Government so long as they were left alone, there was no question of an approach to Lenin's desired *smychka*. The peasants, in fact, were inclined to blame the industrial proletariat for their troubles. During War Communism armed bands of factory workers had passed through the countryside seizing grain by force when it was not voluntarily handed over: and later, during N.E.P., the Government had first

demanded grain as a tax in kind and afterwards compelled the peasants to sell grain in order to pay their money taxes. The peasants got very little in return except the enigmatical benefits of communism, which they were as yet insufficiently politically conscious to appreciate. So far as they were concerned, they were being compelled to feed the urban population, and the urban population was not doing anything noticeable in return. Certainly they had got the land they had coveted for sixty years, and for this they were reservedly grateful.

From the Bolsheviks' economic point of view the continuation of the agrarian situation as it was in 1926 and 1927 offered no prospects. The peasant population was rapidly increasing and the number of peasant homesteads had risen from about 22 millions in 1922 to 25 millions in 1927, and there was a growing surplus of agricultural labour. In 1925, officially, there were 848,000 industrial unemployed, and in 1927 1,353,000. These were almost entirely peasants seeking work in industry, and since industrial employment was rapidly increasing (the number of persons employed in large-scale industry rose from 1.5 millions in 1924 to 2.4 millions in 1927), the migration from agriculture to industry was much greater than the unemployment figures. In Russia unemployment had always risen when industry expanded. The reason was that agricultural labour was never fully employed, and an increase in the demand for industrial labour, which was normally accompanied by a rise in the average earnings in industrial occupations, attracted large numbers of the

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partially employed rural population. Between 1924 and 1927 the average annual earnings of workers in large-scale industry rose from R.428 to R.732. The fact that this caused a large influx of labour from the country indicated that the standard of living of the industrial workers, although still below pre-War level, was rising faster than the standard of living among the peasants. This was scarcely surprising when it is found that the estimated average cost of producing one quintal of rye in 1927 was R.4.73 <sup>(1)</sup> and the average price paid by the Government in 1928 was R.4.41. <sup>(2)</sup> The price paid for wheat was rather more favourable, but on the whole the peasants can have received for produce sold to the State very little more than the bare cost of production. With such a small return for their labour, the peasants were unable to improve their standard of farming. Intensive methods would not have reduced and would have been much more likely to increase the cost of producing a unit of produce, although more produce would have been obtained from a unit of land. In other words, the law of diminishing returns operated against an intensification of farming. Another thing that hindered an improvement in farming technique was the small size of the peasant farm.

The programme of the Narodniki (see page 46) had never appealed to the Bolsheviks, who realistically saw that the perpetuation of a system of small peasant farmers would never result in the agricultural surplus necessary to support a large proletarian population. The Narodniki had been politically active in the third quarter of the

nineteenth century when farming was still largely a matter of hand labour. And though their ideas were still popular with certain sections of the Socialists, the Bolsheviks realised that mechanical power and machinery had radically altered circumstances. They were quite clear that the Party's agrarian policy must be based on large farms served with the most up-to-date labour-saving machinery. A section of the Party, consisting of followers of Trotsky, Bukharin and others who in 1936 and 1937 paid with their lives for their mistake, at one time advocated concessions to peasant capitalism with the object of creating a class of large peasant farmers who would produce a large marketable surplus of grain. However, this policy was rejected and the fifteenth Party Congress in December 1927 adopted a resolution for collectivising peasant farms, and added a recommendation in favour of further measures for the suppression of the kulaks and peasant capitalism.

There was never any chance for the adoption of the proposal of the so-called Right Wing, namely to tolerate, if not encourage, the accumulation of private property in agriculture. In the first place it was much too similar to the Stolypin programme, and in the second place it would never have worked. The Bolsheviks simply could not afford to pay fair prices for agricultural produce, especially for grain. Their whole policy since the Revolution had been to make the peasants pay for their industrial programme because it was impossible to make the industrial proletariat pay, or at least pay the full price. The Bolsheviks, it must be repeated, carried through the Revolution with the active support of

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the urban proletariat. They secured the passive support and sometimes the active support of the peasants by holding out promises they never intended redeeming. The eventual construction and consolidation of the Communist State depended on a large and contented industrial population. Though possibly the chief reason for the expansion of industry and the creation of many very large industrial enterprises was the desire for self-sufficiency and independence of the capitalist world, a second and also important reason was the need for a rapidly growing industrial proletariat. In other words, industry had to be expanded as rapidly as possible in order to create a large industrial proletariat. Since the industrial population could not at the same time create a large amount of new fixed capital and produce a large output of consumption goods, the agricultural section of the population had to provide food for the industrial section without receiving a full equivalent in return. The accumulation of agricultural capital is dependent, in just the same way as industrial capital, on producing and saving a surplus, and since the needs of the industrial population precluded the retention of any considerable surplus by the agricultural population, the creation of a class of comparatively large and prosperous capitalist farmers would have been very seriously impeded if not rendered quite impossible. As a matter of fact the development of peasant farming during the last part of the N.E.P. period showed this in practice. Even when the acquisition of more land and the employment of hired labour was permitted, the larger peasant farmers showed

comparatively little interest in producing a surplus to sell to the State, because it did not pay. The village was becoming increasingly independent of the town, and the Government had to adopt more and more coercive means of obtaining sufficient food to feed the towns. The Bolsheviks attributed this disinclination of the kulaks to produce and sell surplus grain to their malicious enmity to the Soviet Government. It would have been true to say that the peasants saw no particular reason for financing the Bolshevik experiment. They would have responded promptly to a policy that offered them immediate and concrete profits. The production of industrial raw material, such as sugar beet, cotton, hemp and sunflower seed, increased more rapidly than that of grain from about 1922 to 1929, because the State prices paid for these crops were relatively more favourable to the growers than the prices paid for grain, and because there was a good demand by small private enterprises for, among other things, hemp for rope-making and sunflower seeds for oil-crushing.

Apart from the inconsistency of permitting agriculture to be based on private capital and enterprise while industry was completely socialised, and the possible danger to the Communist State if a large and influential class of prosperous peasant farmers was allowed to grow up, the Bolsheviks decided on the collectivisation of peasant farms because this was the only practical way of forming large-scale and economic farm units under effective Government control. A collective farm could be made to grow whatever crop was considered best in the eyes of the Government, irrespective of whether

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it was the most profitable to the growers themselves ; a larger proportion of the harvest could be taken from a collective farm than could easily be recovered from a number of independent farmers cultivating in the aggregate the same area ; a collective farm could be compelled to introduce intensive methods of cultivation, including the use of modern machinery, even if it raised production costs, while the independent peasant, even if a comparatively large farmer, was often too conservative and obstinate readily to adopt new and scientific methods, and in any case required to be convinced that it would be to his pecuniary advantage. Finally, as against State farms, the collective farm was less calculated to involve the State in a loss. A State farm had to pay fixed wages and salaries, its overhead and working expenses were relatively inelastic ; a collective farm, on the contrary, reimbursed its members out of its net proceeds in kind and money. If its proceeds were small the *kolhozniki* had to reduce their own consumption, and the State had to come to their assistance only if they were actually starving. For all these reasons and because cultural and political instruction can be more effectively conducted among an associated group than separate units, the collective farm was adopted as the standard form of agricultural enterprise.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ON THE EVE OF COLLECTIVISATION

As we saw in the last chapter, it was at the fifteenth Party Congress in December 1927 that the decision was made to adopt collective farms as the basis of agrarian policy. When the details of the First Five-Year Plan were made known in 1928, it was seen that the Government expected that, at the close of the period, 15 per cent of peasant farms would be collectivised. It was hoped that the peasants themselves would come to see the advantages of collectivisation and voluntarily combine to form such associations. To assist them in coming to this decision, the Government took certain measures to render individual farming unattractive. It revived class war in the village, setting the poor peasants against the more energetic and prosperous farmers. These, who a short time before had been called useful citizens and the foundation of Russian agriculture, were to their surprise and despair suddenly re-stigmatised as kulaks. Of course they bore no resemblance whatever to the typical pre-War kulak, who was a man of substance and much the social superior of the average peasant small-holder. The pre-War kulak had been destroyed during War Communism, if not physically eliminated ; he had, so to say, been reduced to the ranks. No doubt the new kulak in 1928 was often personally identical with a kulak of

1916, because the qualities that made him a kulak before the revolution enabled him to lift himself from the ruck again.

A point that does not seem to have been sufficiently realised and stressed is that the Bolsheviks in 1928 began a campaign of extermination against a class of farmers who, starting more or less from scratch in 1922, had by their own superior intelligence and energy forced their way to the top. One can understand and to some extent sympathise with the Bolshevik attitude towards the industrialist, the merchant and the kulak in the first year or two of the revolution. It is impossible to deny that the industrial wage-earners and the poor peasants and *batraki* (agricultural labourers) had been exploited in a manner comparable to conditions in Great Britain a century ago. But the N.E.P. kulak enjoyed none of the advantages and privileges attaching to the ownership of capital under the old régime. Soviet law favoured the poor against the rich and the employee against the employer. To become a kulak during N.E.P. was probably much more difficult than before the War and was in the nature of things the result rather of hard work and initiative than cleverness and shrewdness in business. The last-named qualities, which under capitalist conditions contributed as much as sheer hard work to the accumulation of personal wealth, were at a discount after the Bolsheviks had seized power. The only people allowed to be clever were the leading members of the Communist Party.

The notion of joining a collective farm was naturally repugnant to the peasants belonging to

the more prosperous groups, who were not sufficiently politically reliable to be allowed to hold responsible positions, while those classed as kulaks were not admitted to *kolhozy* on any terms. Possibly another motive for the expropriation of the kulaks may have been the practical advantage of securing a certain amount of land and stock for the kolhoz without increasing its membership. The middle and small peasants who formed a majority of the members individually brought very little into the pool. A kolhoz consisting of a number of miserable little farms and their poverty-stricken owners was scarcely likely to turn out a success. It would provide proportionately even less employment than the individual small farms had done, because it would be more economical to work. Therefore it was an advantage if not a necessity to get hold of additional land and stock without having to share the proceeds with the original owners. According to Yakovlev, the then People's Commissar of Agriculture, in 1930 15 per cent of collective farmland in the aggregate consisted of confiscated kulak property. Incidentally this gives some notion of the definition of a kulak: by the middle of 1930 about 35 million hectares had been collectivised, 15 per cent of which amounts to about 5.25 million hectares and this figure in turn was about 4.3 per cent of the total arable land. At a very rough calculation it may be taken that less than 5 per cent of the total number of individual peasant farms had more than 25 acres of arable land; so it may be assumed that a peasant with over 25 acres of reasonably good farm land with adequate live and dead stock stood

in grave danger of being classed as a kulak.

As a matter of fact, during the first couple of years after the abolition of N.E.P., 1928 and 1929, the peasants were not driven into collective farms by actual force. Everything, however, was done to persuade them to collectivise themselves: taxation on independent peasant farmers was increased and various privileges were granted exclusively to collective farms, such as credit to buy machinery. During the two years from the spring of 1927 to the spring of 1929 the percentage of peasant homesteads collectivised rose from 0.8 to 3.9 only.

In spite of the efforts made to attract the peasants into collective farms, they evinced a strange reluctance to give up their independent way of life. There were no doubt various causes for this which did not correspond with the official Soviet explanation. According to the Bolsheviks the average peasant was enthusiastic about joining a collective farm, but the iniquitous kulak prevented him in various ill-defined ways from accomplishing his purpose. No doubt the better-off peasants did use their influence to oppose voluntary collectivisation, but the collective farms already in existence had not shown any marked advance over individual farming and the standard of living in the collectivised farms was no better than that of the average independent farmer. Also the section of peasant population that was in favour of collectivisation, and from which the chiefs of the new farms would certainly be drawn, was composed of the poor peasants and agricultural labourers, in other words the most ignorant and least intelligent members of the community. It was not to be expected that

even the middle peasants, let alone the more prosperous and better-class ones, would willingly share their property with and subordinate themselves to the lowest elements in the rural community. This attitude was labelled "petty bourgeois" by the Bolsheviks, who professed to find it incomprehensible that any individual should prefer his own material interests to the common good of the community. It is quite possible that the idea of collectivisation would have had a greater appeal to the old type of peasant accustomed to regulate his life according to the village mir. Although the nadiel belonging to a village commune was actually cultivated by each peasant household according to its own allotment, the nature of the crop grown and the method of cultivation was governed by the mir. Also tovarishchestva, or land associations, formed by a number of peasants clubbing together to purchase or rent land which they worked on a co-operative basis, were by no means uncommon. But during N.E.P. the communal principle had become greatly weakened. The idea of a periodical redistribution of the land had practically lapsed — it had, of course, almost ceased to be practised before the War when the greater part of the nadiel land throughout the country had not been subject to redistribution for at least fifteen or twenty years. And during the last three or four years of N.E.P. the multiple-strip farm was rapidly being superseded by the self-contained enclosed farm after the fashion of the hutor or otrub of the Stolypin land reforms. The proposal to re-amalgamate the land into large collective farms therefore struck the peasants as distinctly a retrograde idea.

### *On the Eve of Collectivisation*

Up to 1928 the Government had procured its grain requirements by buying what the peasants could be induced to sell. The peasants were compelled to sell in order to pay their taxes and were latterly compelled to sell to the Government at its own price, because transport facilities were refused for private consignments. Hence only peasants living within a comparatively narrow radius of a town were able to sell grain or flour on the town markets. Anyway the consumers' co-operative associations sold cheap bread made from Government grain stocks, so that there was not much demand by the non-agricultural population for supplies of grain or flour from other sources. In 1928, however, the Government was forced to consider more effective means of procuring sufficient grain to satisfy the increasing demand of the urban and industrial population. The peasants who had practically no other market for their grain were beginning to reduce production while extending the cultivation of other crops \* and procuring the money needed to pay their taxes by selling food-stuffs and raw material on the open market, and so to a certain extent passing on their taxes to the consumer. The fact that the area planted with technical crops, fruit and vegetables, increased during this period while the area under grain crops actually declined, clearly shows that the peasants thought that these crops were more profitable than grain. It can also be assumed that the increase in the quantity of livestock, which, except for

\* In 1928 six and a quarter million less acres were sown to grain than in 1927, while the production of cotton, flax, tobacco, sugar beet, etc., was increased by three and a half million tons and the area under vegetables by 222,000 acres.

horses, had by 1928 surpassed the figures for 1916, enabled the peasants to obtain a rising proportion of their money incomes by the sale of animal products. Since the Government had not yet succeeded in developing State procurements and distribution of perishable foodstuffs, but left this largely to the open market, the prices of these commodities were much more favourable to the producers than the prices of grain. The Government, however, was unequivocally opposed to granting increases in the price paid for voluntary deliveries of grain to a figure that, in the peasants' own estimation, made it worth while to sell. To increase prices without increasing the supply of manufactured goods would have resulted merely in a general rise in the retail price level, affecting the industrial population equally with the peasants. The crude expedient of requisitioning grain had been tried with disastrous consequences during War Communism, but some form of compulsion was again unavoidable. The Government's eventual solution was to introduce a system of what it euphemistically called contracts. The chief element of what is usually understood by the word, namely, the freedom of each party to make its own offer, was, however, absent. These contracts bound the peasant to deliver in due course to the Government grain-collecting organisations the whole of his surplus harvest at the price fixed by the Government. The quantity of grain to be delivered by each peasant was assessed arbitrarily by the Government collecting organisations on information supplied by the village Soviet, which was, of course, in the hands of the poor peasants. These were by

no means inclined to let their richer neighbour off lightly, the more so as the higher these were assessed the smaller would be the contribution demanded from the poor peasants. The result was that the richer a peasant was, the more rapid was his impoverishment.

This return to a system of grain procurements, not very different from the requisitions during War Communism, marked the end of N.E.P. liberalism and a swing towards the "Left". The year 1928 was the turning point between the period of restoration, that is, recovery from the economic injuries and destruction caused by the World War and the Revolution, and the period of reconstruction during which the country's natural resources were to be exploited and developed under socialism. The Government and the Party had determined at all costs to press forward with an ambitious industrialisation programme, which the peasants were to have the privilege of financing. The estimates of the burden the peasants could be made to bear were very optimistic and there is no doubt that more was required from them than they could in any circumstances bear. Consequently, during the years immediately following the close of N.E.P. a great deal of agricultural capital was consumed because the Bolsheviks tried to extract from the peasants more than the surplus of their annual gross production. Already in 1928 the first signs of the depletion of livestock, which afterwards became catastrophic, appeared. In order to pay their taxes the peasants were compelled to dip into their capital, the most realisable form of which was livestock. Between the middle of 1928 and the

middle of 1929 the total head of cattle declined by over 3 millions and pigs declined by over 5 millions. Sheep and goats, which had shown considerable annual increases since 1922, remained stationary. In the following twelve months the decline in all livestock, including horses, was much more pronounced. In 1928 Government collections of grain amounted to some 10.6 million tons, or 14.4 per cent of the total crops; in 1929 the Government obtained just on 16 million tons, or 22.3 per cent of the total crop. The bulk of the collections referred to the harvest of the same year, because the Government made a point of prompt deliveries immediately the harvest was gathered. In 1928 the total grain harvest was officially calculated at 73.3 million tons and the 1929 harvest at 71.7 million tons. The quantity remaining at the peasants' disposal after the 1929 harvest was therefore very considerably less than after the 1928 harvest. It is true that the Government's purchasing price in 1929 was somewhat higher than in 1928, and the peasants must therefore have obtained a larger sum of money for their deliveries in that year than in 1928. On the other hand, in 1928 they had a certain quantity of grain to dispose of on the open market at prices much above the Government's purchasing price; as a set-off against this, however, the agricultural tax in the financial year 1st October 1928 to 30th September 1929 yielded R.439.5 million compared with R.384.5 million in the following financial year. The net money yield, after deducting taxes, of the 1929 harvest was probably no more than if as much as the yield from the 1928 harvest, including sales on the open

market. It must also be noted that from 1927 the Government had been trying to restrict the open market for other agricultural produce such as oil seeds, sugar beet, wool, flax and hemp, which during N.E.P. had been purchased by the corresponding industries directly from the peasants as well as through official purchasing boards. The new State collecting organisations set up to procure supplies of these raw materials under the contract system paid the peasants at prices usually appreciably lower than the prices ruling on the open market. All these measures were designed to persuade the peasants to join collective farms, and that they were effective is shown by the fact that during the four months June to September the proportion of peasant homesteads collectivised rose from 3·9 to 7·4 per cent, while during the preceding eight months, October 1928 to May 1929, the increase was only from 2·2 to 3·9 per cent.

## CHAPTER XIV

### FORCED COLLECTIVISATION

IN January 1930 the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued an instruction that by the coming spring 30 million hectares of land should be brought under collective cultivation. This was about 25 per cent of the total area under crops in 1929. Soviet statistics show that in 1929 the land sown by kolhozy amounted to 4.2 million hectares and in 1930 to 38.1 million hectares, while the land cultivated by independent peasants sank from 110 million hectares in 1929 to 81.8 millions in 1930. In point of fact a large proportion of the area credited to the kolhozy was not actually sown by them, but by former independent peasant farmers, who, when subsequently joining a kolhoz brought in the land they had already sown.

By March 1930, 60 per cent of peasant homesteads in the R.S.F.S.R. were officially collectivised. That this result had been achieved by peaceful persuasion and kindness not even the Soviet Government pretended. The original plan for 15 per cent collectivisation at the end of the Five-Year Plan had become much too modest, and for various reasons a much more rapid concentration of the land in large units had become almost a necessity. Soviet industry was beginning the mass manufacture of tractors and agricultural machinery; the Stalingrad tractor factory was due to begin

production in the autumn of 1930 and would soon be turning out thousands of machines a month ; factories for manufacturing combine harvesters and other machinery were already being built in Novosibirsk, Kharkov and other places. Tractors, combine harvesters, etc., are, of course, unsuitable for work on small farms and, if the planned output of the new factories was to be fully and economically employed, it was very necessary that large-scale farming should keep pace. Even if the Bolsheviks had not been absolutely opposed to the growth of private capitalist farming it would have been a long time before any considerable number of peasants had become farmers on a large enough scale for mechanisation. It is true that during the latter part of N.E.P. the peasants in some parts of the country had formed co-operative associations for the acquisition and common use of tractors, etc., which in 1928 were stated to own 6673 tractors, and that in 1927 over 6000 tractors were officially classed as owned privately by peasant farmers ; but there were 25 million peasant homesteads at the time. In 1927 the total number of tractors engaged in agriculture was only 24,500 ; by the end of 1931 they numbered over 100,000. Now one tractor should be capable of all the ploughing, sowing and reaping on a farm of 200 hectares, and the average peasant farm contained a good deal less than 20 hectares of arable land, often split up into a number of separate plots.

The creation of factories to manufacture agricultural machinery cost many hundreds of millions of roubles, which in the long run had to be paid by the peasants whether they liked it or not. Needless

to say they did not appreciate the fact that the reason why they received such an apparently low price for their crops was that a considerable proportion of the value of the grain, etc., delivered to the Government was being invested in industrial enterprises. In fact the peasants were being forced to invest in mechanisation a much larger portion of their income than they would have done voluntarily.

In the last five years before the War the marketable surplus of grain was about 37 per cent ; in other words, over 60 per cent of all grain produced was consumed by the producers : in 1927 the producers consumed over 80 per cent of the grain they produced. With a rapidly increasing urban and industrial population this situation was anything but satisfactory. Unless agriculture produced a larger surplus there might be difficulty in paying for all the industrial investments to which the Government had committed itself. By collectivising the peasant farms, the Government counted on the production of an increasing surplus partly by increasing the area of land under cultivation per head of agricultural worker and partly by increasing the yield of the land through rationalisation and more scientific methods of farming.

A preliminary measure for the collectivisation drive was the more or less official division of the peasants into three groups : poor, middle and rich. Previously these economic divisions had been loosely recognised, but towards the end of 1929 each peasant's label determined his treatment. Peasants labelled rich were *ipso facto* condemned to liquidation, and taxes far heavier in proportion

to those borne by the other groups were imposed on them : if they paid the first time, they were reassessed at twice or three times the original sum. Sooner or later the rich peasant failed to pay his taxes, thereupon his property was nominally sold for the amount of the arrears and handed over to the nearest kolhoz. Middle peasants were taxed somewhat more lightly, but still severely enough ; while poor peasants were taxed very lightly or not at all. The Government relied mainly on the last-named as the prime movers towards collectivisation ; they were already poverty-stricken enough not to feel any reluctance to give up their independent farms and the Government did not want to antagonise them before they had served its purpose. The middle peasants were considered a tougher problem. On principle they might be expected to retain a preference for economic independence, but their condition was not such as to make the idea of collectivisation hopelessly repugnant. By judicious taxation they might be brought to the verge of ruin and rendered so much the more receptive to the collective idea. The middle peasants formed a great majority of the peasant population and could not be spared, and therefore it was unwise to exasperate them needlessly or impair their efficiency. As a matter of fact the application by the local authorities of the Government's methods of making the middle peasants collective-minded had precisely the opposite effect. So far as the kulaks were concerned, the official opinion was that they were incapable of becoming good kolhozniki ; since they were impervious to any form of persuasion and, under compulsion,

would be disruptive elements in any kolhoz, they were to be removed from the scene. As collectivisation was going to bring about such an economy of labour there was much in favour of reducing the agricultural population by a few millions.

A great deal has been written about the horrors of the collectivisation war, which it is unnecessary to repeat here. During the first three months of 1930 by one way and another millions of peasant homesteads were collectivised and in the process an enormous amount of agricultural capital was destroyed. Between the middle of 1929 and the middle of 1930 the total head of livestock declined by over one-fifth, buildings and machinery deteriorated through neglect or were deliberately damaged and large areas of orchards and other permanent cultures were destroyed. It is true that before entering the kolhoz most peasants got rid of as much of their movable property as could be disposed of, and in many cases actually destroyed both live and dead stock rather than hand it over ; but the loss by malicious destruction has been exaggerated. The 1929 harvest was rather poor, and Government collections of grain were about 51 per cent larger than in 1928, consequently there was less grain in the villages and in some districts an absolute shortage, which resulted in cattle being killed for food. The most serious losses, however, were almost certainly due to the sheer ignorance and stupidity of the politically conscious proletarian workers drafted into the countryside to organise the new kolhozy. Their usual procedure was to order the peasants to bring their livestock and

### *Forced Collectivisation*

implements to some central spot, normally the largest farmstead in the village formerly belonging to a liquidated kulak, without making any provision for maintenance. Consequently animals froze or starved to death and farm implements were broken or became damaged by weather. The only institutions that benefited from the collectivisation campaign were the State farms, who bought up peasant property at dirt-cheap prices. In the course of 1930 the State-farms' head of livestock increased as follows: horses from 213,000 to 623,000, cattle from 741,000 to 2,526,000, sheep and goats from 2,649,000 to 4,845,000 and pigs from 190,000 to 1,130,000.

Though the Soviet Government fully intended to speed up collectivisation in 1930 by fairly drastic measures of compulsion, it had certainly not contemplated going to the extremes that were perpetrated. The Bolshevik leaders had from the first shown both a lack of understanding of the peasant outlook and mentality and a want of tact in dealing with them. Few, if any, of the competent leaders were of genuine peasant origin and they seem to have thought the peasants ought to react to the new order in much the same way as the industrial proletariat. But the latter had not suffered a fundamental change in their condition; they had exchanged private employers for the State, but they still worked in the same factories for a regular wage. Collectivisation, however, meant an enormous change in the peasant's life. It seemed to them a return to the pre-War conditions of dependence from which they thought the Revolution had delivered them. In fact they

ironically read the initial letters of the "All-Union Communist Party" (*Vsesoyuznaya Kommunisticheskaya Partiya*) as standing for the Second Serfdom (*Vtoroye Krepostnoye Pravo*). Although in theory the kolhozy were to be co-operative enterprises in which all the members had an equal voice, the people who arrived in the villages to organise the kolhozy and become their first presidents left the peasants in no doubt what the kolhoz was in fact to become. Every able-bodied member was to do whatever work he was detailed to, and to work during specified hours. In return he was to receive rations and, perhaps, a small sum of money, but he had no voice in the disposal of the farm's produce, all of which, surplus to the consumption needs of the farm, was to be handed over to the State at a fixed price, very low in comparison with the prices charged by the State for the goods produced by State industries. It may be doubted whether a kolhoz run by its members on a truly co-operative basis would have been a success. The Russian peasant was a good co-operator up to a point, but he was too individualistic readily to submit to the discipline necessary if a large farm were to be carried on by co-operative labour. Besides in a farm run entirely by peasants the administration would almost certainly be conservative and mistrustful of new methods. But with patience and tact, and above all if the Government had used as kolhoz organisers real farmers who knew their job and whom the peasants could respect and understand, the whole story might have been very different. The tragedy was that nothing was done to make the prospect of col-

lectivisation even tolerable to the average peasant, in fact everything pointed to a loss of economic and even of personal freedom coupled with a reduced standard of living.

It is in human and particularly Russian nature to love destruction for destruction's sake. This was shown time after time in all the peasant risings throughout the history of the country, when peasants burnt and destroyed not only the dwelling-houses of the landowners, but their cattle, crops and farm implements. And the Marxian doctrine as adopted by the Bolsheviks holds that reform is futile, and that a new political and economic system can arise only on the shattered ruins of its predecessor. So it was quite in line with both national temperament and the revolutionary spirit to ruin the peasants and destroy the ancient form of agriculture before building up the new system. As a direct consequence of this destruction, half the total head of livestock was lost within a space of four years; probably not less than five million peasants, including families, were deported to Siberia and the Far North, and of these it is estimated that 25 per cent perished. Also, very largely as a result of neglect of the land, growth of weeds, late sowing, etc., comparatively dry summers in 1931 and 1932 resulted in such poor harvests that millions, variously estimated at four to ten, of persons died of direct starvation or diseases induced by starvation. According to official figures the number of peasant homesteads or families fell from 25·8 millions in 1929 to 20·9 millions in 1935, a loss of 24 million individuals. In the same period the urban popula-

tion increased at most by 16 millions of which not more than four millions can be attributed to natural increase. Therefore it would seem that only about 12 million persons migrated from the country to the towns. The number of employees and workers in all branches of State service increased by 12.6 millions in the same period. It is thus quite out of the question that anything like 24 million people from the rural areas were absorbed by the towns or in industry; besides in 1933 the passport system was introduced for the express purpose of preventing the urban population becoming enlarged by the addition of surplus agricultural population looking for employment in industry.

In a very short time the campaign of forced collectivisation caused such chaos in the countryside that the Central Government had to take steps to prevent the complete ruin of agriculture. In March 1930 a letter by Stalin entitled "Dizziness from Success" was published in all Soviet newspapers. In this Stalin, after giving qualified praise to the collectivisers for their energy and enthusiasm, reproached them strongly for their tactless and impetuous handling of the peasants. They had used force where persuasion was called for, and driven the peasants into kolhozy when they should have led them. The principle of voluntary collectivisation was reaffirmed and the peasants were informed that those who had been collectivised against their will were to be allowed to leave the kolhozy. In two months collectivisation in the R.S.F.S.R. fell from 60 to 23.4 per cent. This was a temporary and hollow victory for the

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peasants. Those who left the kolhozy did not recover their former holdings, but had to take whatever vacant and therefore usually inferior land was available; neither did they get back all their animals and stock, usually they were given a sum of money in compensation, which being calculated at the Government's arbitrarily fixed purchasing price was hopelessly insufficient to recoup their losses. Most of the peasants who left the kolhozy in the spring of 1930 were only too glad to be readmitted before the end of the year.

In accordance with the later fashion of blaming all mistakes on enemies of the Soviet State, the revised *History of the All-Union Communist Party*, published in September 1938, alleges that the "Leftists" deliberately used the opportunity to antagonise the peasants and create bad blood between them and the Government. At the time only excess of zeal was charged against the more truculent and brutal of the party activists, and some who failed to mend their ways were punished, not so much for being politically out of line as for mere insubordination. The party administrations of a few provinces were purged, because they had permitted the excesses of the party collectivisers. The most surprising aspect of the whole incident, however, is the extraordinary indifference and even definite enmity shown towards the peasants by the party activists, in spite of Lenin's doctrine of the *smychka*. It is difficult to say how much this was due to the traditional antagonism between peasant and worker and how much to the propaganda of the Party. In Russia the exchange of

goods between the urban consumer and the peasant producer was always much more direct than in Western countries, where the consumer buys nearly all his requirements from a middleman. Consequently if food prices in the Russian towns rose, the townsman promptly put the blame on the greedy peasant. The townsman, even if only one generation removed from the land, was inclined to despise the peasant for his ignorance and uncouth ways.

At the same time, at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan there was a lot of genuine enthusiasm, especially among the younger section of the urban proletariat, both for communism in the abstract and for the concrete progress that communism was to achieve. The peasants did not share in this enthusiasm nor did they show any readiness to co-operate with the industrial workers, that is, feed them gratis while building up Soviet industry. In theory the party organisers were supposed to call village meetings to explain to the peasants the advantages of collectivisation both from the social and technical point of view, but as they too often showed ridiculous ignorance of the technique of farming, the peasants naturally distrusted their proposals. Eventually the meetings had to vote on the question of forming a kolhoz, but if the temper of the peasants seemed unfavourable or even doubtful, the collectiviser put the question, "Who is against the Government's policy?" According to the Government's plan collectivisation was to progress at varying rates in different parts of the country. The most important grain regions in South and Eastern

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Russia were to be collectivised in the shortest time because they were already fairly well supplied with tractors and machines, and generally best suited to large-scale mechanised farming. The slowest rate of collectivisation applied to the Northern Provinces, Transcaucasia and Central Asia, where peasant farming was much more mixed and on the whole more primitive than in the grain regions. But the peasants in the first group were precisely those who most resented compulsory collectivisation. In the North Caucasus, where the peasant farms were on the average much larger than in Central Russia and where the peasants themselves, and more especially the Cossacks of the Don, Terek and Kuban districts, were more independent and self-reliant than in those parts where serfdom had been the normal peasant status up to 1861, the conflict reached serious proportions and might almost have been called a peasant insurrection.

Fortunately for the country 1930 was an excellent harvest year, so that the food situation remained satisfactory in spite of the disorganisation of agriculture, and much more grain was exported during the twelve months beginning with the 1930 harvest than in any other year since 1915 to the present. As a matter of fact more grain was exported than a prudent policy could have approved; the reason being the urgent need for foreign currency to pay for the industrial equipment the Soviet Government had bought abroad. Soviet statistics show that the total area sown for the 1931 harvest was very considerably larger than in the previous year, 341 million acres

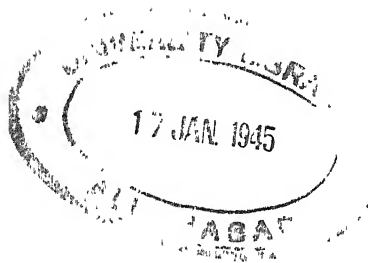
against 318 millions, but for various reasons the 1931 harvest was a partial failure. The year was abnormally dry and drought had a good deal to do with crop failures in many important grain-growing regions, but the harvest was much worse than it should have been because the autumn and spring sowings were carelessly carried out by collectivised peasants who had lost all interest in their work. The ignorance of many kolhoz presidents, who were too conceited to take the advice of experienced peasant farmers, often resulted in astonishing innovations in farming practice and contributed to the disaster. The most striking feature of collective farming in those early years was the prodigious growth of weeds that covered hundreds of thousands of acres of arable land and alone accounted for an appreciable decline in the yield of the soil.

According to Soviet records the total grain harvest in 1930 amounted to 83·5 million tons, and in each of the years 1931 and 1932 to a trifle less than 70 millions, a drop of some 16 per cent. The exports in 1930 and 1931 had reduced reserves to a dangerously low level, so that when the harvest in 1931 turned out badly the country found itself on short rations before the 1932 harvest was ripe. That harvest was again much below the average ; but the Government made no reduction in its demands from the peasants, who in some of the districts worst hit by the drought actually reaped less grain than the amount they were required to deliver to the collecting organisations. In the winter of 1932-33 and the spring of 1933 famine conditions developed in several large

grain-growing regions in the Ukraine and South Russia.

The blame for the catastrophe has been laid by the Soviet Government and its foreign admirers on the peasants. It is pointed out, with some plausibility, that had the peasants spontaneously co-operated with the Government and gracefully submitted to collectivisation, some of the causes of the famine would not have arisen. It was the apathy, obstinacy and obstructionist tactics of the peasants, resulting in bad cultivation, late sowing and wasteful harvesting, that contributed to the crop failures. It is a matter of opinion and political persuasion whether the peasants were to be blamed for resisting the subversion of their whole economic foundations and their enforced submission to a mode of life in which they did not believe. But the most important and immediate cause of the bad harvests in 1931 and 1932, apart from drought in some regions, was the slaughter of draught animals and the failure of the tractor industry to supply a corresponding amount of mechanical draught power. The struggle over collectivisation ended distinctly in favour of the Soviet Government, unlike the conflict that brought War Communism to a close. The peasants were no longer able to starve the Government into yielding, because the Government had now created an efficient organisation for obtaining the foodstuffs necessary for the subsistence of the urban and industrial population. It had shown the peasants that, if anybody was to starve, they would be the first to do so. The peasants, therefore, decided to make the best of the situation and began to drop their obstructionist

tactics. Whether collectivisation can justifiably be claimed as a success depends on what is meant by success. It is questionable whether the kolhozniki in the mass are better off or enjoy a higher standard of living than they would have done had they remained small peasant farmers; and the use of machinery and the employment of scientific methods of farming have not yet had a striking effect on the yield of the land, though it has resulted in a large expansion of the area under cultivation.



## CHAPTER XV

### ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF KOLHOZY

WHEN the Soviet Government first decided to create collective farms by administrative action instead of leaving the peasants to form voluntary associations, it drew up and issued model articles of association for an agricultural *artel* as a guide to local authorities. The articles were simple and comparatively short and consisted of seven clauses of which the following gives the substance.

- (1) *Purposes and Objects.* — We, poor peasants and middle peasants of the village of —, of our own free will unite in an agricultural artel so that our united means of production and our common organised labour may be used for the purpose of forming a large collective economic unit.
- (2) *Land.* — All boundaries separating the arable holdings of the members of the artel shall be removed. No land can be withdrawn from the pool by a member leaving the artel. Those leaving the artel can only obtain land from free State Land.
- (3) *Means of Production.* — The following live and dead stock becomes the collective property of the artel: draft animals and other livestock, all seed reserves, fodder in sufficient quantities to feed the livestock, farm

implements, buildings necessary for running the farm and all agricultural plant. The dwelling-houses of the members of the artel are not collectivised. One cow per household or dvor may be left in private ownership for the use of the members of the dvor ; poultry shall not be collectivised, and in areas where small livestock farming is not developed, pigs, sheep and goats shall not be collectivised. But, where practicable, collective farms shall organise small livestock and poultry enterprises.

- (4) *Activities of the Artel.* — The management and members undertake to —
- (a) Increase the amount of land under cultivation by making use of all available land.
  - (b) Make full use of all motive power, implements, tractors, machines, seed and other means of production.
  - (c) Maintain in good order and condition all live and dead stock and employ them only for their proper purposes.
  - (d) Take proper measures to increase the yield of the land and improve permanent pasture.
  - (e) Raise the cultural level and political enlightenment of the members.
  - (f) Improve the standard of living of the members.
- (5) *Membership.* — Any worker can become a member of an artel upon reaching the age of sixteen. Peasants who slaughter or sell their livestock and dispose of their imple-

ments before applying for membership of an artel shall not be admitted.

- (6) *Resources of the Artel.* — Every new member shall pay an entrance fee in proportion to the value of his property ; landless agricultural labourers shall pay not more than 5 roubles.

Of the property brought into the artel by each member, from 25 to 50 per cent shall be credited to the reserve fund : the greater the value of the property the higher is the proportion credited to the reserve. The balance shall be considered the member's personal share in the artel.

The administrative and working expenses shall be covered out of the net income of the artel, from which deductions shall also be made for the support of persons unfit for work and for reserve and other funds.

- (7) *Organisation and Payment of Labour.* — All work shall be carried out by the personal labour of the members. The hiring of outside labour is permitted in exceptional circumstances. Standards of output and costing schedules shall be laid down and a system of payment for work performed shall be adopted. During the year advances not exceeding 50 per cent of the amount due to them may be paid to members of the artel to enable them to buy food and other necessities.

The early kolhozy consisted of the separate farms formerly belonging to their members, and

these did not necessarily form one block of land. Many kolhozy, probably at the beginning a majority, had scattered pieces of land interspersed with independent peasant farms. Neither was the land belonging to a kolhoz permanently conveyed to it. Land was taken from or added to kolhozy at the arbitrary whim of the district authorities. In the neighbourhood of towns and villages building sites were often taken from the nearest kolhozy or a *sovhoz* might enclose an outlying bit of kolhoz land to round off its own boundary. The amalgamation of two or even more small kolhozy into a single large one was sometimes ordered by the local authorities if it seemed good to them. Land belonging to sovhozy which was inconveniently situated or perhaps of inferior quality was handed over to the nearest kolhozy, who had to accept it whether they wanted it or not. Between the end of 1935 and March 1937 transfers of land from sovhozy to kolhozy amounted to about 55 million acres. The probable reason was the persistent failure of sovhozy to pay their way and the improvement in the efficiency of the kolhozy, which on the average give better returns than the sovhozy.

The course of events in 1931 and 1932 showed that the peasants were not becoming noticeably reconciled to collectivisation. Apathy had succeeded active resentment, but unless the kolhozniki could be induced to take an active interest in their work the hopes placed in collectivisation were clearly not going to be realised. The bare fact was that, however hard a kolhoznik worked, he received nothing beyond a bare subsistence. The State

claimed all the produce grown on the farm over and above a very moderate allowance for the upkeep of the farm and the bare necessities of the kolhozniki, and the small monetary remuneration paid to the kolhozniki was insignificant in view of the high prices they had to pay for what few manufactured goods were available. In a large proportion of kolhozy the kolhozniki were allowed to have a cow and poultry and grow vegetables for themselves on a garden plot ; but these privileges were not an inalienable right ; they depended largely on the caprice of the kolhoz president and the local party officials. Members of kolhozy within reach of a town could sell any surplus food they might have to the townspeople ; but free trading was, strictly speaking, illegal, and, though tolerated within limits, involved a certain risk. Needless to say, the kolhoz did nothing to assist its members to sell their foodstuffs on the open market, and in remote districts there was no inducement at all for the kolhozniki to produce more than they could consume at home. Of course, this state of affairs was bad for the townsfolk too. The State and co-operative distributing systems were not always able to provide their customers with the rations they were entitled to buy, let alone with any extras. Consequently the prices paid in the free market for food were fantastic, at least four or five times greater than the prices of the same goods when sold against ration-books.

Towards the close of 1932 the Government made two concessions : it instituted officially administered and organised free peasant markets in the towns at which both kolhozy and kolhozniki

had the right to sell their produce at uncontrolled market prices, and it amended the system of Government collections of products subject to compulsory delivery to a fixed quantity per unit of land planted with specified crops. This meant that every kolhoz knew at the beginning of the year exactly how much grain, potatoes, etc., it would have to hand over to the State collectors after the harvest, instead of being assessed at harvest-time at the whim of the local collecting organisation. The kolhoz was allowed to deal with the balance of its harvest as it liked, provided, naturally, that it made the necessary provisions for seed, fodder and other domestic requirements. These two concessions made a big difference to the kolhozniki, for they made it worth their while to try to increase the yield both of the farm land and their own gardens, poultry, etc.

As soon as the kolhozniki began to realise that something might be made of collectivisation, they started to demand a say in the management of the kolhozy and some voice in the disposal of the farm's resources and income. Since 1930 or even earlier, increasing numbers of young kolhozniki had received training as agricultural experts in various branches, as tractor drivers and mechanics, and had in the process received a certain amount of general education and had gained a broader outlook than the typical peasant. In short, a class of agricultural worker was being formed that had a good deal in common with the urban proletariat. Of course, this new type of agricultural worker even now forms an insignificant fraction of the kolhoznik mass, but it consists of the more

intelligent and enterprising elements and contains a relatively high proportion of party members or party sympathisers. It seems not improbable that these considerations played some part in the Government's decision to draw up a new and much more complete set of model articles of association for agricultural artels in 1935. Early in that year a special *ad hoc* congress of kolhoz representatives was held to receive and adopt the Government's draft constitution, or statutes, for agricultural artels. As usual, there was little real discussion; the members of the congress, if they spoke at all, contented themselves with paying conventional tributes to Stalin for his liberality and prescience in granting a charter to the kolhozniki defining their rights and duties, and protecting them against victimisation and exploitation by other authorities. As a matter of fact, it did not by any means end exploitation, but it certainly did improve the general condition of the kolhozniki.

Since the model kolhoz constitution is one of the most important events in the history of agricultural collectivisation, it must be given in full:

## THE MODEL CONSTITUTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL ARTEL

### I

#### *Aims and Objects*

1. The working peasants of the village voluntarily associate themselves in an agricultural artel, in order by means of the common possession of the means of production and the mutual organisation of their labour to create a collective or socialised economic

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unit, to complete the extermination of the kulaks and all exploiters and enemies of the workers, to banish poverty and ignorance and dissolve the remnants of small individual undertakings, and raise the productivity of labour and thus improve the standard of living of the collectivised peasants.

The path of the collective farm is the path of socialism and is the only true path for the working peasant to follow. The members of the artel undertake to consolidate their organisation by honest toil, to share the collective income according to their individual contribution of work, to protect the common property and goods, to maintain the tractors, machines and horses in good condition and fulfil all their obligations towards the Workers' and Peasants' State; and thus create a truly Bolshevik collective farm and enable every collectivised peasant to become prosperous.

## II

### *The Land*

2. All boundaries formerly separating the farms of individual members of the artel shall be demolished and the land amalgamated into a single aggregate area for the common use and profit of the artel.

The land occupied by an artel (and this applies equally to all land in the U.S.S.R.) remains the property of the State. By virtue of the laws of the Workers' and Peasants' State it is transferred to the artel for the latter's permanent use. Land cannot be sold nor bought nor leased.

Every artel shall receive from the District Executive Committee a State certificate confirming the permanent usufruct of its land. This document shall accurately delineate the boundaries of the land, of which no reduction is permissible. Additions to the land held by an artel can be made only from unoccupied State areas or from unused land occupied

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by independent peasants, with the proviso that there shall be no interposition (*i.e.* a plot of independent peasant land surrounded by collectivised land, or *vice versa*).

Small allotments shall be provided out of the artel's land for the private use of every household as vegetable gardens, etc.

The area of these garden allotments (excluding the area immediately surrounding the dwelling-houses) shall vary between  $\frac{1}{4}$  hectare and  $\frac{1}{2}$  hectare, though in special districts it may amount to 1 hectare (2.5 acres).

The area of land held by an artel can in no circumstances be reduced. It is forbidden to allot any artel land to a member leaving the artel, who can receive an allotment only from unoccupied State land.

Farm land held by an artel shall be divided into fields in accordance with the authorised crop rotation. Each farm brigade shall be attached to specific fields for the period of an entire crop rotation (*i.e.* three or more years).

When an artel possesses a considerable head of livestock, if the area of the farm permits, a certain area may be set aside for the sole purpose of growing fodder crops.

### III

#### *The Means of Production*

4. The following are held in common : all working cattle, agricultural implements (ploughs, drills, harrows, etc.), seed stocks, fodder in quantities sufficient to supply the needs of the collective live stock, farm buildings necessary for carrying on the work of the artel and all enterprises for working up the products of the farms.

The following remain in the private use of the individual households : dwelling-houses, private live-

stock and poultry, such buildings, etc., as are necessary for the proper housing of private livestock, and the garden tools necessary for cultivating private allotments.

At its own discretion the administration of the artel may allow against payment the farm's working cattle to be used by individual members for their own purposes.

Artels shall, whenever possible, organise a mixed livestock produce farm (*i.e.* a livestock side comprising cattle, sheep, pigs, etc., for producing marketable commodities). When an artel possesses a specially large head of livestock, several specialised livestock departments may be organised.

5. Every *dvor* in an artel in a grain, cotton, sugar beet, flax, hemp, potato, vegetable, tea and tobacco-growing region may have for its own use one cow, two calves, one sow and its progeny, or, at the discretion of the farm administration, two sows and their progeny, up to 10 sheep or goats, an unlimited amount of poultry and rabbits and up to 20 beehives.

Every *dvor* in an agriculture region in which there is a well-developed stock-breeding industry may possess 2 to 3 cows together with their calves, 2 to 3 sows and their litters, from 20 to 25 sheep and goats, an unlimited quantity of poultry and rabbits and up to 20 beehives. This applies to agricultural areas not contiguous to regions inhabited by nomad people, such as certain districts of Kazakhstan, the forest parts of White Russia, the Tchernigovsky and Kiev provinces of the Ukraine, the Barabinsky Steppes and the Subaltai regions of Western Siberia, the Ishimsk and Tobolsk regions of the Omsk province, the mountainous parts of Bashkiria, the Eastern portion of Eastern Siberia, the agricultural districts of the Far Eastern Province and the Vologda and Holmogorsky districts in the Northern Province.

Every *dvor* in non-nomad or semi-nomad regions where agriculture plays a minor rôle and stock-breeding is the chief industry may own 4 to 5 cows

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and their calves, from 30 to 40 sheep and goats, 2 to 3 sows and their progeny, an unlimited quantity of poultry and rabbits and up to 20 beehives; in addition, 1 horse or 1 milch mare (for the production of Koumiss — a Mongol or Tartar drink made of fermented mare's milk), or 2 camels, or 2 asses, or 2 mules. Among these regions are included the stock-breeding districts of Kazakhstan and those parts of Kazakhstan contiguous to nomad districts, the stock-breeding regions of Turkmenistan, Tadzhikistan, Kara-Kalpakia and Kirgisia, Oiroitiya, Hakassia, the Western part of Buriat-Mongolia, the Kalmuck Autonomous Area, the mountainous parts of Dagestan, the Tchecheno-Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevsky and Ossetine Autonomous Areas in the North Caucasus, and the mountainous parts of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia.

Every dvor in the nomad regions where agriculture is practically non-existent may own 8 to 10 cows and their calves, 100 to 150 sheep or goats, an unlimited quantity of poultry, up to 10 horses, and from 5 to 8 camels. Such districts are the nomad areas of Kazakhstan, the Nagaisk region and the nomad areas of Buriat-Mongolia.

## IV

### *The Operations of the Artel and its Administration*

6. The artel shall carry out its collective work according to a plan, paying strict attention to the Government's plan of agricultural production, and with due regard to its obligations towards the State.

In carrying out field work the artel shall execute the various seasonal tasks such as ploughing, sowing, etc., in accordance with the requirements of each particular crop, and shall also carry out the Government's plan for developing the livestock side of its activities.

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The management and all members of the artel shall —

- (a) Increase the yield of the farm by observing a proper system of crop rotation, deep ploughing, fallowing, etc., and strictly adhere to the rules laid down by the local agro-technical authorities.
- (b) Select the best available seed and see that it is properly cleansed and stored.
- (c) Extend the cultivated area of the farm by using all suitable land at the disposal of the artel.
- (d) Use to the best advantage and keep in good repair and condition all implements, machinery, draught cattle, etc.
- (e) Organise a livestock department, including where possible horse-breeding. The artel shall also take adequate steps to improve the livestock belonging to the individual members of the artel.
- (f) Increase the production of fodder and improve meadows and pasturage, giving assistance also to the individual members of the artel by advice and by allowing them the use of the common pasture-land when possible.
- (g) Develop all other branches of agricultural production suitable to the locality, as well as handicrafts.
- (h) Construct buildings on proper economic principles.
- (i) Improve the technical proficiency of the kolhoz-niki, according to their qualifications posting them to brigades or appointing them tractor drivers, cattle and horse men, veterinary or laboratory workers, etc.
- (j) Improve the cultural level of the artel by providing newspapers, books, wireless, etc., by forming clubs and libraries and installing baths, barber shops, and by seeing that the streets and premises of the village are kept clean and orderly and the houses in good repair.
- (k) Draw the women into the productive work of the farm, and give them opportunities of developing

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their qualifications and increasing their experience by relieving them, as far as possible, from domestic duties through organising crèches, kindergartens, etc.

### V

#### *Membership*

7. Elections of new members take place at a general meeting of the kolhozniki to consider candidates proposed by the administration.

All workers of both sexes having reached the age of sixteen years, are eligible to become members of an artel.

Kulaks and all persons deprived of civil rights are ineligible for membership. But this does not apply —

- (a) To children of outlaws who for some years have been engaged in communal agricultural labour and have worked conscientiously.
- (b) To former kulaks and members of kulak families who, having been exiled to new settlements on account of their anti-Soviet and anti-collective attitude, have during the past three years given evidence of their reform by honest labour and subordination to Soviet regulations.

Independent peasants who sold their horses less than two years before being admitted to an artel and who possessed no seed, must within six years repay to the artel out of their own income the price of a horse and a given quantity of seed.

8. Expulsion from an artel can be effected only by the decision of a general meeting of members at which not less than two-thirds of all members are present. In the protocol of expulsion must be shown the number of members present at the meeting and the number of votes passed for expulsion. An expelled member may appeal against his expulsion to the District Executive Committee, and his appeal will

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eventually be decided by the Presidium of the Committee in the presence of the director and managing committee of the artel.

## VI

### *The Property of the Artel*

9. New members on entering an artel must pay an entrance fee of between 20 and 40 roubles per dvor according to their means. The entrance fees of new members are paid into the indivisible fund.
10. One-quarter to one-half of the property brought in by new members of the artel shall be credited to the indivisible fund. The remaining part of the property shall be considered as the dividend-earning contribution of the member concerned.

In the case of a member leaving the artel, the management shall make a settlement with him and return to him the value of his dividend-earning contribution in the form of money. No member leaving an artel can be allotted any of the land belonging to the artel.

11. The gross produce from both the arable and livestock sides of the artel farm is disposed of as follows, in order of precedence:
  - (a) The delivery to the State of compulsory quotas, the repayment of seed loans and payment in kind to the M.T.S. (Machine Tractor Stations) for work carried out in accordance with the contract concluded between the artel and the M.T.S. (See Chapter XVI.)
  - (b) Provision of seed for the following agricultural year and fodder for the cattle for the following year; the formation of a reserve fund as an assurance against harvest failures.
  - (c) Provision for the subsistence of invalids, the aged and those who are temporarily incapacitated from work, the families of serving soldiers, and to

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supplying meals to children in the crèches and to orphans. The total amount allotted for these purposes is determined by the members at a general meeting, but shall not exceed 2 per cent of the farm's total produce.

- (d) Marketable surplus as determined at a general meeting of members for sale either to the State or on the open market.
- (e) The remainder of the artel's farm produce shall be divided among the members of the artel according to the number of their labour-days.

#### 12. The monetary income of the artel is allotted to —\*

- (a) The payment of taxes and insurance premiums.
- (b) A dividend of not less than 60 to 70 per cent of the whole income to the kolhozniki in proportion to their labour-days.

\* In the original statutes as published in February 1935 section (b) of Clause 12, providing for the distribution of not less than 60 to 70 per cent of the gross money income among the kolhozniki, was omitted. The final section (f) then read: "The artel shall distribute the whole of its remaining money income among the members of the artel in proportion to their labour-days".

The sums distributed as labour-day dividends had previously not exceeded 30 to 40 per cent of the kolhozy's gross money income, and in many individual kolhozy the members had received very much less.

Section (b), which guaranteed a minimum dividend of 60 per cent of the kolhozy's gross money income to the kolhozniki, was promulgated in a decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Party on 19th April 1938. In the preamble it was stated that — "Kolhoz managements, under the direct encouragement of Rayon, Provincial and Republican Party and Government Organs, are expending the major part of their revenues on the erection of communal buildings in the kolhozy and on productive and administrative costs, in consequence of which that part of the money income distributed among the kolhozniki on account of labour-days is reduced to a minimum, so much so that kolhozniki are often compelled to seek outside employment for wages and the kolhozy themselves not infrequently suffer from a shortage of labour". It is clear that the amendment to the statutes was called forth by a general discontent of the kolhozniki with their share in the kolhozy's income. The new rule for distributing an increased share of the

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- (c) Necessary current expenditure such as repairs to machinery, treatment of animals, measures against pests, etc.
- (d) Administrative expenses, not to exceed 2 per cent of the farm's gross money income.
- (e) Cultural purposes, such as technical courses for

kolhozy's money income was to apply to settlements after the 1938 harvest; that would in most cases not be until after the New Year, when all State deliveries and voluntary sales had been completed.

On 5th December 1938, however, the Government revoked the concession made in April. On the ground that local organs and kolhozy had approached the Government asking for the April decree to be annulled, Clause 12 of the Statutes was again amended to the following: "The money income of the artel shall be distributed as follows:

- "(a) The payment of State taxes as established by law, the payment of insurance premiums and the repayment of financial loans.
- (b) Necessary expenditure on current productive needs, such as repairs to equipment and machinery, treatment of livestock, campaigns against pests and vermin.
- (c) Administrative costs, which must not exceed 2 per cent of the gross income.
- (d) Cultural requirements, such as the training of staff, organisation of crèches, children's playgrounds, the installation of wireless.
- (e) The indivisible fund of the artel for the purpose of purchasing equipment and livestock, building material, and the payment of wages to outside workers engaged for building.

The proportion of the money income to be appropriated to the indivisible fund shall be, in grain regions, not less than 12 and not more than 15 per cent; in regions growing technical crops or engaged in stock-raising, not less than 15 and not more than 20 per cent.

- (f) The remainder of the artel's money income shall be distributed among the members in accordance with their labour-days".

As a result of the decree of 5th December the kolhozniki became, apparently, worse off than before. The proportion of the gross income allotted to the indivisible fund was increased and there was no limit on the sums that might be expended on current productive and cultural needs. It is unlikely that the kolhozniki receive for their labour-days as much as the 30 to 40 per cent of the farms' gross income that they received before.

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kolhozniki, crèches for the children of kolhozniki, club and reading-rooms, etc.

- (f) The indivisible fund, not exceeding 10 per cent of the gross money income, for purchasing farm stock, erecting new buildings, and generally for increasing and improving the capital resources of the artel.

The artel administration draws up the artel's annual budget, which, however, must be approved and adopted at a general meeting of members.

When passed, the budget is obligatory on the artel administration, which must obtain the approval of a general meeting of members before funds may be diverted from one object to another.

## VII

### *The Organisation, Payment and Discipline of Labour*

13. The work of a collective farm is normally to be performed by the members of the artel. Outside assistance is only to be resorted to when it is necessary to call in the services of an expert, or when ordinary hired labour is required to supplement the full labour strength of the artel during a rush of work. Outside hired labour may be employed in building.
14. The members of the artel shall be organised into "brigades".

Agricultural brigades are formed for a period not less than a complete crop cycle. They shall be attached to the same fields for the whole period.

Every agricultural brigade shall be allotted the necessary machinery, implements, animals and farm buildings to enable it to carry out its work.

Livestock brigades are formed for a period of not less than three years. Each brigade has a definite head of stock allotted to it with the necessary complement of implements, draft animals, buildings, etc.

The members of the brigades shall be allotted to

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jobs by their brigadiers, who are to avoid any favouritism or discrimination and shall pay due regard to each individual's skill and capacity. Women are not to work for one month before and one month after childbirth, and during these two months are to be credited with half their average earnings.\*

15. All agricultural work is to be remunerated on the piece-work system.

The management of the artel is to work out scales of work and fix the labour-day equivalents. The scheme must be approved at a general meeting of members.

The daily task in every sort of job must be within the capacity of the ordinary member working conscientiously.

In determining the labour-day equivalent of the unit task (*e.g.* ploughing a hectare, sowing a hectare, picking a hectare of cotton, threshing a ton of grain, etc.), due consideration must be given to the degree of skill required, the difficulty of the work, etc., and its importance for the community.

The brigadiers must reckon up the labour-day earnings of each member of their brigade at least once a week and enter the result in the members' labour-books.

Every month the administration must expose a list of members showing the number of labour-days earned by each during the preceding month.

At the end of the year the book-keeper shall calculate each member's total earnings, and after a counter-check by the brigadiers and the president, a complete statement shall be exposed in public at least two weeks before the date of the general meeting at which the distribution of the artel's income is to be decided.

If any agricultural or livestock brigade, by reason of excellent work, returns a greater yield from its land or animals than the average for the whole

\* That is less than the pre-War party programme demanded of bourgeois Governments.

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farm, the management may award each member a bonus up to 10 per cent more labour-day units than have actually been earned, up to 15 per cent to each *stakhamovetz* in the brigade and up to 20 per cent to the brigadier.

In the case of a brigade returning a lower yield than the average through bad work, a deduction up to 10 per cent from the labour-day earnings of each member may be made.

The division of the divisible income of the artel among the members shall be strictly *pro rata* according to their labour-day earnings.

16. Every member may receive money advances during the year up to 50 per cent of the sum already due to him.

Advances in kind to members may be made after threshing has begun from the 10-15 per cent of the amount threshed which may be devoted at once to the farm's internal consumption.

In farms growing technical crops such as cotton, flax, etc., money advances may be made to members up to an aggregate amount not exceeding 60 per cent of the value received for current sales of produce. That is, the distribution of the artel's monetary income shall not be held back till the total crop has been sold.

17. All members of an artel must obey the decision of the general meeting and the administration, take all possible care of the farm's property and State machines working on the farm, and generally do their work honestly and observe proper discipline.

Misbehaviour, disobedience, laziness and so on is punished according to the artel's rules, e.g. a badly done job must be done over again without pay; an offender may be censured or reprimanded at a general meeting of members, may have his name written on the "black" board,\* may be fined up to

\* Names of exemplary workers are displayed on "red" boards, names of bad workers on "black" boards.

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five labour-days, may be degraded to a lower job, or may be temporarily suspended from work.

If all attempts to reform a member by persuasion or punishment fail, the management may propose his expulsion to a general meeting of members. Expulsion may then follow under the provisions of Clause 8 above.

18. Any damage or loss caused to collective or State property, by negligence, abuse of the property or animals belonging to the farm or the machinery of the M.T.S. shall be regarded as treason towards the community and as support of the enemies of the People.

Any person accused of such crimes shall be handed over to the authorities for punishment according to the laws of the Workers' and Peasants' State.

## VIII

### *The Administration of the Affairs of the Artel*

19. The affairs of the artel are controlled by the members in general assembly; during the periods between general meetings decisions are taken by the administration elected and appointed by the members in general assembly.
20. The general assembly is the highest authority. Its functions are :
  - (a) To elect the president, the managing committee and the revisionary commission, the last-named being confirmed by the District Executive Committee (*i.e.* the local Government authority).
  - (b) To decide on the admission of new members and the expulsion of existing members.
  - (c) To approve and confirm the annual production plan, the estimates of incomings and outgoings, the standards of work and the value of different kinds of work in labour-days.
  - (d) To confirm contracts entered into with the M.T.S.
  - (e) To approve and confirm the general annual report

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of the administration in conjunction with the revisionary commission, as well as the separate reports of the administration on the most important activities of the artel.

- (f) To approve and confirm the amount of the various funds and the labour-day equivalent in produce and money.
- (g) To confirm the internal rules and regulations of the artel.

In all the above-mentioned questions a decision by the administration is invalid until confirmed by the general assembly.

For ordinary decisions a quorum of one-half the full number of members is necessary, but a decision in the following questions requires the presence at the meeting of at least two-thirds of the full membership :

Election of president and managing committee.

Expulsion of a member.

The determination of the amounts of the various funds.

All resolutions are passed by a majority vote recorded by open voting.

- 21. The managing committee of five to nine members, according to the size of the artel, is chosen by a general meeting of members from among their own number. The committee is elected for a period of two years.

The committee is the executive organ of the general meeting of members, to which it is responsible for all its activities.

- 22. The president, who is *ex officio* chairman of the managing committee, is responsible for the day-to-day routine of the farm and for seeing that the decisions of the committee are carried out.

The president must call a meeting of the committee not less than twice a month for the purpose of considering current matters and taking any necessary decisions.

The committee shall appoint one of its number

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as vice-president, who shall take his orders from the president.

23. Brigadiers and managers of the livestock departments shall be appointed by the committee for a period of not less than two years.
24. For keeping the books and accounts of the farm the committee may appoint a book-keeper from among the members of the artel or engage an outside book-keeper at a salary. The book-keeper shall keep the accounts according to the approved system, and is directly subordinate to the committee and the president.

The book-keeper shall have no personal authority regarding the disposal of the farm's means, nor in respect of advances to members in money or kind. These matters can only be decided by the committee and the president. All documents relating to payments of money require the signatures of the book-keeper and the president or vice-president.

25. The revisionary commission shall check all the economic-financial actions of the committee to ensure that all receipts in money and kind are properly accounted for, and that all outgoings and expenditure are agreeable to the regulations and constitution of the artel, to guard against waste and the improper use of the artel's property and to ensure that the artel fulfils its obligations towards the State, and to see that all debts are punctually paid and money due collected.

The revisionary commission shall also check all accounts between the artel and the individual members and generally safeguard the interests of all parties.

The revisionary commission shall hold an audit four times a year. The annual accounts shall be audited and formally certified as correct before submission to the general assembly.

The revisionary commission is responsible to the general assembly for all its actions.

These statutes, in theory, made the kolhoz a

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co-operative and democratic association of peasants engaged in farming an area of land, with fixed and inviolable boundaries, granted by the State in perpetuity and free of rent. The members of the kolhoz, in theory, enjoy the right of choosing their president, vice-president, and committees of management and revision (*i.e.* auditing) committee; they also, within the framework of the State Plan for agriculture, have the right of deciding what crops shall be grown and on what land, and the right of determining the disposition of the collective revenue of the kolhoz remaining after the State's demands have been satisfied. In later chapters we shall try to discover how much real control the kolhozniki have in the management of their collective property.

## CHAPTER XVI

### MACHINE-TRACTOR STATIONS

THE Machine-Tractor Stations (M.T.S.) were organised in their present form by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars issued on 2nd September 1933. Before collectivisation became the rule, and when by far the greater part of the agricultural land was still farmed by independent peasants, a certain number of co-operative M.T.S. were formed to provide tractors to do the ploughing and harvesting of peasant farms. The scale of payment for the use of the tractors was fixed by mutual agreement between the members of each co-operative. Towards the end of 1929, that is, when the Government had decided on the forced collectivisation of the peasants, the first M.T.S. were established for the sole purpose of cultivating the fields of collective farms. The collective farms were not obliged to accept the services of the M.T.S., and payment, from those that did, for the use of the tractors was usually made in money. The system consisted rather in hiring out tractors to the kolhozy for a certain period than in providing tractors to perform a certain specified task.

In 1933 the decree mentioned above contained rules for the organisation of new Machine-Tractor Stations. The type of M.T.S., depending on the nature of the principal crop (grain, cotton, sugar beet, etc.) grown in the district, was to be decided

by the Provincial or Republican Government, but the appointment of the director, senior agricultural expert, senior mechanic and chief book-keeper in each M.T.S. was retained in the hands of the Union Commissariat of Agriculture. The general regulations also provided that the whole equipment of each M.T.S. was to be divided into brigades under brigadiers and that two drivers were to be attached to each tractor and work in shifts, these appointments being in the hands of the director.

When forced collectivisation was begun in 1930 there were only 158 M.T.S. belonging to State organisations and 479 co-operative M.T.S. in existence, and less than 40,000 tractors all told available for agricultural purposes, of which less than 10,000 belonged to State M.T.S. and were available for cultivating the fields of the newly formed kolhozy. The Government in its anxiety to have fields for the new tractors to cultivate succeeded in producing the fields before the tractors. One of the most important reasons for collectivisation was to make mechanical farming possible and economical; in fact from the purely objective point of view there would have been no sense in merging a large number of small farms into one large enterprise without mechanisation. That is not saying that compact medium-sized peasant farms were not more efficient than the old strip farming even without mechanisation, but farms consisting of hundreds of acres of arable land simply demanded mechanical power. This was not available at the start, for the M.T.S. established in 1929 and 1930 were more or less experimental. At the end of 1933, however, the M.T.S. possessed

well over 100,000 tractors and had emerged from the experimental stage. It was expedient to standardise the relations between the M.T.S., now exclusively State enterprises, and the kolhozy ; the Government therefore early in 1934 issued a standard form of contract, as a guide to M.T.S. and kolhozy, when making their mutual arrangements for the year's work.

Besides specifying the amount and the nature of the work to be performed by M.T.S. tractors, combine harvesters, threshing machines, etc., the contract provided that the M.T.S. should assist the kolhozy with advice on technical questions, such as the rotation of crops and financial plans, and give instruction to members of the kolhoz in the use and care of machinery, etc. The kolhoz, for its part, undertook to provide all the necessary field labour and to put into effect the instructions issued by the district authorities and the M.T.S. As payment to the M.T.S. for the use of its machines the kolhoz delivers a certain percentage of the harvest to the State collecting organisations, in addition to the statutory delivery of so much per hectare under cultivation, according to the actual yield realised as shown in table on opposite page.

These rates, especially in the higher yields, are some 10 per cent less than the rates originally laid down in 1934. They come to about 11 per cent of the gross yield when the crop is small, to nearly 20 per cent when the crop is good, for the whole cycle of work, and somewhat higher proportionately for isolated tasks, such as ploughing. On the whole the charges for the use of M.T.S. tractors

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and machinery do not seem exorbitant if the work is properly and punctually done. But this is by no means always the case.

The terms of the contract show how much control the M.T.S. have over the kolhozy. The M.T.S.

#### SCALE OF PAYMENT IN KIND TO M.T.S. AS FIXED FOR 1937

Work Done	Harvest Yield in Quintals per hectare						
	Under 3	3 to 5	5 to 7	7 to 9	9 to 11	11 to 13	Over 13
	Quantities to be delivered to the M.T.S. (Kilogrammes)						
Spring ploughing . . .	9	22	50	70	90	110	130
Ploughing up fallow . . .	8	20	42	60	80	100	120
Sowing . . .	2	4	8	12	16	20	25
Threshing . . .	7 % of the grain threshed by M.T.S. machines						
Harrowing once over . . .	0.5	1	1.5	2	3	4	5
Harvesting with combines	9 % of the grain reaped and threshed by M.T.S. combines						
Carrying out the whole cycle of cultivation :							
A. Separate threshing }	13	30	55	80	105	130	170
	Plus 7 % of the grain threshed by M.T.S. machines						
B. Harvesting with combines }	9	20	37	54	71	88	128
	Plus 9 % of the grain reaped and threshed by M.T.S. combines						

together with the *Rayzo* dictate all the major operations of the kolhozy and, since kolhozy are permitted only in exceptional circumstances to possess tractors and complex machinery of their own, they are largely at the mercy of the M.T.S.

The main function of the M.T.S. is to provide tractors to haul the so-called "coupled-up" machinery (ploughs, harrows, seed-drills, etc.,

which belong to the kolhoz and not to the M.T.S.), combine harvesters and power-driven threshing machines. Kolhozy which possessed such machinery had to sell them to the M.T.S. in 1934, and only such farms that are not fully served by kolhozy are now allowed to possess any motive machinery of their own, with the exception of motor lorries. The reasons for concentrating power machinery in the M.T.S. are, fairly obviously, the more economical use and better care possible when all the tractors, combines, etc., in the district are at the disposal of a single authority, possessing also a more or less well-equipped repair depôt. It is also alleged by some critics that another motive was the strangle-hold it afforded the Government over the kolhozy. It is quite true that the kolhoz is very much at the mercy of the M.T.S., but whether kolhozy are in fact often exploited by the M.T.S. is doubtful. The disadvantage of the system is that if a M.T.S. is badly managed, its machinery in bad order and inefficiently organised, the whole district will suffer; and the fact that not infrequently one comes across cases where the harvests in neighbouring districts show a remarkable difference is probably attributable to one district being served by a well-run and efficient M.T.S. and another by the reverse.

The actual tractor-drivers, combine mechanics, etc., are very largely active members of the kolhozy. Every M.T.S. has to select and train the men to drive its machinery, and during the busy seasons the drivers and mechanics are attached to their machines, going with them from one kolhoz to another and not working exclusively on their

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own farms. Tractor-drivers were paid by the kolhoz on whose land they were working in money and kind, according to a scale of labour-days laid down in a decree of 13th May 1938. (For actual scale see page 179.) But the money portion was in practice collected by the M.T.S. from the various kolhozy and redistributed among the drivers. This system had serious defects, for it was recorded <sup>(3)</sup> that on 15th November 1938 five thousand M.T.S. still owed their tractor-drivers R.206 million ; one specified M.T.S. had apparently not even paid R.50,000 earned in 1937, and this was not an isolated case. In such circumstances it was not surprising that tractor-drivers left their work in the middle of the season and tried to find work with another M.T.S. that paid promptly. In January 1939 the Government issued a new order under which all tractor-drivers were to be paid in cash out of State funds a guaranteed minimum of R.2.50 for every day's work, the difference, if any, between this and the money value of their labour-day being paid by the kolhoz concerned. The guaranteed money wage was not to affect their labour-day dividend in kind, which must be delivered to the tractor drivers' own home by the kolhoz and, in the case of grain, must not be less than a guaranteed minimum per labour-day. Whether the kolhozy are entirely relieved from cash payments to tractor drivers up to R.2.50 per labour-day was not clear, but if this was the case it would obviously amount to a considerable saving.\*

The form of model contract drawn up in 1934

\* See Appendix No. 2.

was in some ways unsatisfactory, for in January 1939 a new form of contract was published, which instead of affording a standard model for the guidance of M.T.S. and kolhozy was to be accurately followed and have the force of law. The new contract differed from its predecessor in laying down more rigid rules and enforcing a greater degree of responsibility on both parties in the punctual and accurate performance of their respective obligations. It contains, for example, a table showing the precise area of land to be ploughed, cultivated, etc., the depth of furrows, the dates when each class of work must be completed, etc. ; while on its part the kolhoz must provide a specified number of field hands for various tasks, have its own machinery and implements in good repair when required, provide the requisite quantity of good seed where and when wanted, and so on.

Some alterations were also made in the scale of payment in kind for certain categories of work, which on the whole tended to reduce the total amount due from the kolhoz. On the other hand the harvest yield groups were to be altered by abolishing the lowest group, that is for harvests under 3 quintals per hectare, and introducing another group for harvests of 15 quintals per hectare and over. This would, of course, tend to increase the quantities of grain due to the M.T.S. It was also provided that harvest estimates for the purpose of fixing the amounts due to the M.T.S. were in future to be made by the republican or provincial Governments and not, as formerly, by the district commissions, which possibly were thought too lenient towards the kolhozy. A rule that certainly

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seems rather arbitrary and capable of leading to injustices was that all the kolhozy in a single district were to be classed together according to their estimated average harvests ; and only in the event of there being very large differences between the yields of different kolhozy might individual kolhozy be transferred into another group.

Amendments were also made in the method of financing M.T.S. Under a law of 5th February 1938 all current and working costs were financed from the national budget, which opened an annual or six-months credit for each M.T.S. at the nearest branch of the State Bank. Since the amount was fixed the M.T.S. was often able to save money by economising in petrol, oil, etc., through shallow ploughing and by delaying the start of spring operations until the ground was in easy working condition. Under the new dispensation the M.T.S. are credited every quarter and the amount to which they can draw on their accounts depends on the way in which they fulfilled their Plan during the preceding quarter. In addition to this, extra allowances of tractor fuel and wage increases are given during the first few days of the spring ploughing season in order to get the tractors on to the land at the earliest possible moment — a consideration which is of the utmost importance to the spring grain crops. Then at the end of the year the manager and chief officials of the M.T.S. may receive bonuses ranging from one to three months' pay if they have satisfactorily fulfilled their Plan and the average yield of the farms they serve comes up to or exceeds expectations.

The main interest in recent legislation affecting

agriculture in general and the M.T.S. in particular is the very apparent change-over to a policy of rewards for good work from a policy of threats and coercion. Of course penalties for negligence, breaches of the laws and regulations, and anything that may be prejudicial to the country's agricultural interests, are still imposed ; but it is evident that the Soviet Government has concluded that satisfactory results can be expected only from people who are contented and have something to gain by good honest work. The frequent and numerous laws and decrees as well as the changes in general policy show that the condition of agriculture is still far from satisfactory, and one is forced to conclude that this is often due as much to mere ignorance and stupidity as to wilful carelessness or even sabotage. At the end of the farming year nearly every tractor in the country needs extensive repairs, which are frequently not completed when the tractors' services are required again in the spring, the delay being due as often as not to the failure of the tractor works to deliver spare parts. Whether the mechanisation of farming pays, that is to say whether the total cost of mechanisation has resulted in a commensurate increase in the quantity of produce grown and whether the cost of doing a given amount of work with power machinery is less than doing it with draught animals, is doubtful. An examination of this question is made in Chapter XXII.

As a result of the disorganisation in agriculture after forced collectivisation and the failure of the kolhozy to make progress and particularly to cultivate a proper political outlook, the Government in

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January 1933 attached to every M.T.S. and sovhoz a "Political Detachment", or *Politotdel*, to exercise political supervision over the attached kolhozy. According to the relevant decree it was determined—

With a view to the political consolidation of M.T.S. and sovhozy and to increasing the political rôle and influence of the M.T.S. and sovhozy in the countryside, and to evoking a decided improvement in the political and economic activities of the party cells in the kolhozy and sovhozy . . . to organise *politotdely* in all M.T.S. and sovhozy.

Each *politotdel* consisted of a chief and two assistants answerable only to their central organisation and able, in political matters, and that can be construed to cover almost anything, to override the president of the M.T.S. or the sovhoz and the local Government and party authorities. Some 25,000 party members in all, predominantly belonging to the urban proletariat, were despatched into the country and were distributed among more than 5000 *politotdely*. It is almost superfluous to say that they were chosen for their loyalty to the Party and communist single-mindedness and not for their knowledge of agricultural conditions. For two years the *politotdely* were in full control of all the work on kolhozy and sovhozy; without their approval nobody could be appointed to any post of importance and they had the power to dismiss any official and expel kolhozniki from their kolhozy. Their primary task was to purge the kolhozy of all elements unfriendly to the Government and combat any form of resistance to or even laxity in fulfilling the State's requirements of grain deliveries. During the first year of their activity it

was indicated by official reports that they caused the removal of from a third to a half of all the officials of kolhozy, including presidents, and many thousands of ordinary members were expelled.

Although probably a majority of the kolhozniki had joined the kolhozy under coercion and were apathetic if not resentful and secretly hostile, in most kolhozy there existed nuclei of reliable and subservient members, mainly former poor peasants and batraki for whom life in the kolhozy was no harder than in their former circumstances. In some ways they found the kolhoz preferable to the old life ; they were at least the equal of their former superiors and sometimes of former employers. And because they were of irreproachably pauper origin and were known to be politically sound and properly class-conscious, they secured small privileges and were flattered by the party authorities. These elements were organised by the politotdely as groups of militants, or "activists" as they came to be known. From their members officials were chosen to replace those who had been removed and in the general meetings of kolhozniki the activists took a leading part. They were also no doubt useful as spies on members whose political orthodoxy might not be above suspicion.

The politotdely doubtless fulfilled their function of inculcating a proper respect for collectivism and the Government's policy in the kolhozy, but they did little to improve their technical efficiency. The decree which dissolved them at the end of 1934 contained the following passage :

Nevertheless experience has shown that in proportion to the increasing problems of village leadership the

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politotdely as such are inadequate, because for the direction of all activities in the collectivised village — political, economic and social — a consolidation of the normal party and Soviet organs is needed, embracing all activities, including administrative, economic, social and cultural, financial, etc.

For these reasons the Central Committee of the Party decided to convert the politotdely into ordinary party organs, merging them with the existing rayon committees, which were henceforward to exercise control over all primary party organisations in the rayon. In every M.T.S. the deputy director was to have as his special province all political questions and be responsible for the political correctness of all measures initiated by the director, and at the same time was to exercise the functions of secretary to the party organisation of the employees of the M.T.S. The former members of the politotdely were to become secretaries of newly reorganised rayon party committees, deputy directors of M.T.S. for political duties, officials in the new rayon committees, in the committees of the "Young Communist League", etc.

Thus, although the politotdely were nominally dissolved, their work was to be carried on without interruption. The former members who became rayon committee secretaries, deputy directors of M.T.S., etc., held their posts directly under the Central Committee of the Party, and therefore in reality possessed a greater security of tenure and superior authority to the presidents and directors holding their posts under the republican or provincial Government. In fact they became for practical purposes the dictators of the rayon.

## CHAPTER XVII

### AGRICULTURAL ADMINISTRATION AND THE ORGANISATION AND REMUNERATION OF LABOUR

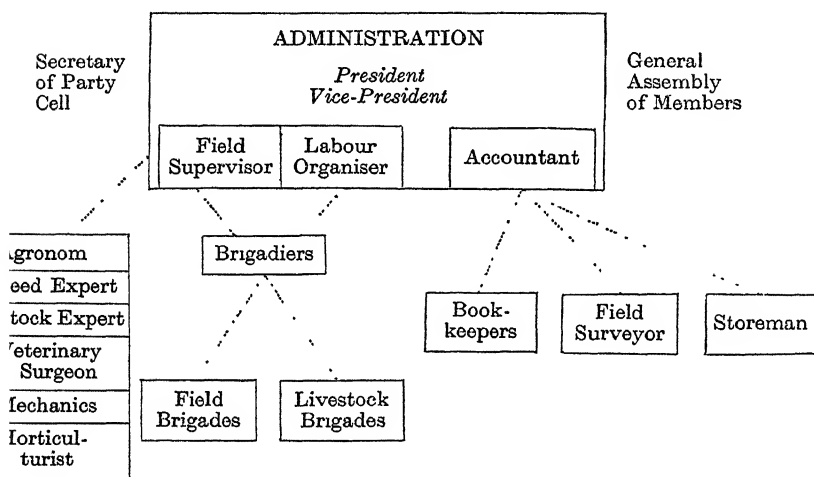
THE People's Commissariat of Agriculture, which is comparable to the Ministry of Agriculture in any capitalist Government, is responsible for carrying out the Soviet Government's agricultural policy in the technical sense. The Commissariat draws up both the Five-Year Plans and the single-year plans, which include questions concerning the areas to be planted to different crops, stock-breeding, etc. As we have already seen, the political organisation of kolhozy is controlled by the Central Committee of the Communist Party through the rayon party committees. It might perhaps seem that politics have not much to do with farming, but in the Soviet State it is a matter of considerable importance that the heads of enterprises, in agriculture the presidents of kolhozy, should be politically sound and trustworthy. Rayon party committees therefore exercise a great deal of influence in the choice of kolhoz presidents.

The local organisations with which the kolhozy come into direct contact are the rayzo, the village soviets, the rayon representatives of the State Collecting Organisations and the rayon party committees, and these in turn receive their orders and instructions from the republican or provincial governments and party committees. Up to 1932

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all kolhozy were associated in rayon unions, which, in much the same way as the village consumers' co-operative associations form the base of the pyramid whose apex is *Tsentrosoyuz*, were eventually united through provincial organs in the Central Union of kolhozy. But this organisation was dissolved and the kolhozy are now without any sort of organisational link.

The typical domestic organisation of a kolhoz is best shown in the following diagram : <sup>(4)</sup>



The secretary of the party cell is a political official representing the rayon party committee, whose main function is to see that the Party's instructions are properly carried out and to guard against any heterodox ideas gaining currency in the kolhoz. The general assembly of members has the theoretical right to elect the president and to decide certain matters of domestic policy coming within its competence, such as decisions regarding

the distribution of the farm's surplus produce and money revenue among the members (see Kolhoz Statutes, Chapter XV). Rules are, however, laid down which leave in actual fact very little discretion to the members.

The president of a kolhoz is usually a party functionary and not a farmer and, in fact, very few presidents are local men (or women, for some presidents are females) or even of rural origin. The 25,000 industrial workers who were sent into the country in 1930 to become the first kolhoz presidents were the forerunners of a class of professional presidents who to-day rule most of the 240,000 kolhozy.

The vice-presidents, on the contrary, are mainly drawn from the peasant class and undertake the supervision of the economic activities of the farm. They, together with the field supervisors, were at the beginning of the great collectivisation drive often peasants who had been prisoners of war in Germany and had there learnt something of the German methods of farming. As their name implies, the field supervisors are responsible for the general work on the farm, while the labour organisers are responsible for the proper distribution of the farm's labour resources among the various activities of the farm. The accountant is, of course, in charge of the office and clerical work, which besides keeping accounts both of the farm's money and material resources, has the task of booking up each member's labour-days and recording the normal tasks which constitute a labour-day, which are largely fixed by the field surveyors.

The agronomists, or general farming experts, and

the other experts are frequently salaried employees and not members of the kolhoz. In principle they have no executive authority, but act as advisers to the administration, though those with special duties, such as the veterinaries and the mechanics, naturally have the power of acting independently and on their own initiative without waiting for instructions when it is a question of dealing with sick animals, or defective machines. The brigadiers may be compared with foremen and the brigades to labour gangs.

Kolhozy differ considerably both in regard to size and the number and nature of various activities carried on. Therefore all kolhozy do not possess the full complement of experts as enumerated above. But in all kolhozy the number of administrative and executive staff officers is high compared with the total membership. Every kolhoz has, as a matter of course, a president, a vice-president, a field supervisor, a labour organiser and an accountant. Thus the administrative committee, or presidium, to use the Soviet term, normally consists of five persons. Most large farms have their own agronom, but smaller farms often share one agronom with two or three others or employ the services of the M.T.S. staff agronom. The same applies to stock experts, veterinary surgeons, etc. The number of field surveyors, brigadiers, office clerks, etc., depends on requirements, while some farms that carry on subsidiary enterprises, such as wine-making, alcohol distilling, dairying, tanning or even brick-making, possess experts to supervise these branches. In addition to the above, who may be described as forming the

administrative and executive staff, every kolhoz employs a certain number of watchmen, whose duties include guarding the ripening crops from theft, though this is now not so prevalent as during the early days, and nurses and children's governesses who take charge of the kolhozniki's babies and young children when the mothers are at work. It should perhaps be mentioned that female labour plays a rather surprisingly large part in the work of most kolhozy, largely because so many of the younger men leave to seek more exciting careers in industry, in the defence forces, in professions, etc., while still others are absent on seasonal industrial jobs or are undergoing courses to qualify as experts in various branches of farming or as tractor-drivers, etc.

In the early days of collectivisation the labour of the members of kolhozy was imperfectly, not to say badly, organised. The principle of dividing the workers into brigades was adopted already in 1930, but the brigades were not permanent and consisted of a large number of workers who were set to do whatever seasonal work was to be done throughout the whole farm with all the machinery and implements belonging to the farm. For instance an *ad hoc* brigade would be formed, perhaps consisting of a hundred or more workers, to plough with all the available ploughs, while another brigade would be employed in hoeing root crops. The result of this lack of system was too often indifferently performed work, and it tended to encourage slackness and carelessness with machinery since it was difficult or impossible to fix responsibility on individuals. There was very little

direct incentive to the ordinary kolhozniki to work well and conscientiously because, for one thing, the majority had been more or less forced into the kolhozy against their own will, and for another the system of equal remuneration (which will be dealt with later) together with the very low reward for labour tended to encourage shirking. In February 1932 the Government issued a new law concerning the organisation of labour in kolhozy. Briefly the new system consisted of allotting all the workers in a farm to permanent brigades of up to some 100 persons. Each brigade was further subdivided into a number of detachments known as *svena* or links, often consisting of relations or members of families living in close proximity or connected in some way or other. The important innovation, however, was that each brigade was attached to a particular part of the farm for a whole rotation of crops (three years or more) and had allotted to it a definite and fixed inventory of working animals and machinery. In this way it was possible to control the work and fix responsibility, and, at the same time, the results of each brigade's efforts were clearly visible. The remuneration of the members of the brigade were made partly dependent on the results, those belonging to a brigade whose crops succeeded above the average receiving a bonus, while deductions might be made from the dividends due to members of a brigade whose land was badly farmed and consequently yielded less than the average.

If in theory the kolhoz is a form of co-operative enterprise, in actual fact the kolhozniki have little voice in the organisation of their own farm. Not only are the main activities of the farm, the crops

to be planted, the livestock to be raised, the technical methods to be employed laid down by the Plan, but the scale of remuneration for work done and the form in which that remuneration is paid is governed by law. To a certain extent the kolhoz-niki may have some say in the constitution of the brigades, but as these have to conform to certain specified rules it is obvious that the members have only a limited choice. And once allotted to a brigade the kolhoznik has to obey the orders of his *svenovod* (the head of a sveno), who is under the brigadier, who is responsible directly to the president.

In the early days of collectivisation the principle of equal remuneration, irrespective of the amount or value of work performed, greatly influenced the system of remunerating labour. When kolhozy were first formed there were pretty obvious reasons why each household should receive remuneration, especially in kind, according to the number of eaters or mouths, as the Russian expression goes. A peasant with a large family of young children would, if payment were calculated according to his own personal efforts, find collectivisation much less attractive than the peasant with few dependants. Another thing that was at first taken into consideration was the amount of land and stock the household had brought into the kolhoz when joining it. Originally 5 per cent of the net income was set aside to pay dividends on capital, but the idea of distributing anything in the nature of "un-earned" income was soon dropped. In fact it seems to have been nothing more than a device to reconcile the larger peasant farmers to pooling their property with their poorer neighbours. Certainly

the statutes of 1935 made no provision for distributing any part of the divisible income as dividends on capital brought in to the kolhoz by each member.

In 1930 the principle of payment according to time worked became the rule, but without taking into account the severity of the task or the skill required. It would be difficult, if not quite impossible, to say what was the typical form of remuneration at that time. Collectivisation on a national scale only began in 1930. Prior to that the kolhozy were small islands in the midst of a sea of independent peasants and more or less made their own rules. Then, when the Soviet Government decided on forcing the pace, it drove the peasants into kolhozy without having thought out and published proper instructions for organising them. The constitution of different kolhozy was left very largely to the local organisers. It is one of the peculiarities of Soviet planning to start construction before the plans are complete. One has heard of, and even seen, industrial enterprises being built in the middle of the steppe before any roads have been marked out, let alone made, or houses prepared for the workers; while quarterly and annual plans for production or distribution are frequently finally drawn up and issued long after the period to which they refer has begun. So it was not surprising that the collectivisation drive was begun before it had been decided exactly what sort of thing a kolhoz was to be. The natural result was that the organisation of labour and the remuneration for that labour differed in different kolhozy according to the private views of the people who brought them into being. And these views varied

according to the political idiosyncrasies of the organisers and their understanding of rural conditions.

The principle of piece rates, under which the kolhoznik was paid according to the amount and the nature of the work performed, was eventually adopted, because it was found that a flat rate of payment resulted in the workers doing just as much work as they could not manage to shirk. To-day everybody on the working list of a kolhoz is paid according to the number of labour-days he, or she, performs. But a labour-day is not a time unit except in jobs that cannot be measured by concrete results. Thus the president and other officials and the technical experts belonging to a kolhoz, the crèche and kindergarten attendants, watchmen and the like are credited with labour-days for every day they are on duty, but ploughmen, reapers, etc., are credited according to the measured results of their work. In actual fact only a comparatively few classes of kolhoz worker earn exactly a labour-day unit for a day's work. According to the standard rules there are seven classes, ranging from the president, senior tractor-drivers and combine harvesters, who are credited with two labour-days for each day actually on duty, with the proviso that the tractor-drivers, etc., perform a certain minimum task in the time, to watchmen, cleaners, etc., who score only half a labour-day for every day on duty. It is of course possible for those on piece-work, such as ploughmen, tractor-drivers, etc., to earn more than their normal number of labour-days by performing more than their standard day's task. And excess results are paid for at increasing rates ; thus during

harvest a tractor-driver or a combine-harvester who avoids stoppages and works overtime can earn an astonishing number of labour-days in the twenty-four hours and receive possibly a couple of thousand roubles as the result of a few weeks' intensive effort.

At first sight it might seem that the kolhoz president, who bears the whole responsibility for running a very complex enterprise, ought to be paid considerably higher rates than a tractor-driver, however skilled. For the latter is, after all, only a mechanic without much responsibility. But the president is on duty every day except on rest-days and when and if he takes a holiday, and therefore earns probably not far short of three hundred labour-days in the course of the year; while the tractor-driver probably works less than two hundred days. The lower-paid groups, such as watchmen, milkmaids, shepherds, and women in charge of the poultry, although they can earn less than one labour-day in every twenty-four hours, still have regular employment, whereas a field hand may not work more than 180 days on the kolhoz land. Thus the actual remuneration of every worker in a kolhoz depends on two things — first, the rate in labour-days or fractions of a labour-day that can be scored for an actual day's work; second, the number of days in the year on which work is performed.

In the case of the employees, that is the office staff and the various experts, who are not members of the kolhoz, remuneration may be entirely in money which can be used for buying foodstuffs from the kolhoz at considerably less than shop or market

prices, or payment may include rations. Of late there seems to be an increasing tendency to place employees on a wholly monetary salary and leave them to buy their requirements where they like. Nowadays there are far greater purchasing facilities than there used to be. Most villages contain a consumers' co-operative shop selling a fairly wide range of prepared foods, including bread and tinned goods of all sorts, while in the larger villages and small townships there are weekly market days at which the kolhozniki sell vegetables, milk, eggs, etc., that they produce on their own allotments.

The value of the kolhoz labour-day is variable. In State farms the employees and farm labourers are paid a fixed salary or wage in exactly the same way as the employees and workers in a State industrial enterprise ; but the kolhoz, as has been explained before, is in theory and to some extent in practice a co-operative enterprise in which all the members are in a sense shareholders. A fixed wage would therefore be out of place. Membership of a kolhoz entitles the member to a share in the net products, or profits if one likes to use that word, and his share is determined by his contribution towards producing a divisible surplus. The labour-day thus represents a fraction of the total divisible surplus, and the actual value of the labour-day unit depends first on the total amount of the divisible surplus, and secondly, on the total number of labour-days scored by all the members.

As the result of an investigation into 85,000 kolhozy (about 35 per cent of the total number in the Soviet Union), the Central Statistical Bureau

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found that on an average each worker and each dvor received the following quantities of grain, potatoes and vegetables as labour-day dividends: <sup>(5)</sup>

	Per Dvor (Quintals)			Per Worker (Quintals)		
	Grain	Potatoes	Vegetables	Grain	Potatoes	Vegetables
1932	5.5	2.1	0.5	2.6	1.0	0.2
1933	9.8	5.7	1.4	4.7	2.7	0.7
1934	10.9	7.8	5.4	5.4	3.9	1.1

According to published figures, the average number of persons per dvor in 1932 was 4.8 of whom just over two were workers. The non-workers as a rule would be children and would not require so much food as adults, so, if we allow four members to each dvor, the quantities per head would be (in kilos) :

	Grain	Potatoes	Vegetables
1932	142	52	12
1933	245	142	35
1934	272	195	135

The consumption of these commodities per head of rural population in 1926-27, and 1927-28, that is, when the mass of peasants was not yet collectivised, was (in kilos) : <sup>(6)</sup>

	1926-27	1927-28
Rye (in terms of flour) .	103	102
Wheat (in terms of flour)	86	85
Potatoes . . .	150	144
Vegetables . . .	54	55

In the regions producing a surplus of grain an investigation into 17,000 dvory in 1927 showed a

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consumption of 239 kilos of cereals per head.<sup>(7)</sup>

The consumption of cereals per head of rural population before the War and during the middle period of N.E.P. was (in kilos) : <sup>(8)</sup>

	Deficit Areas	Surplus Producing Areas
Pre-War, according to investigations into peasant budgets Researches into the food situation :	241	278
1924-25     .     .     .	252	258
1925-26     .     .     .	245	274

Since the compulsory deliveries to the State, the proportion of the crop due to the M.T.S., seed for the next year, fodder stocks and the grain reserve have to be covered before any dividend may be distributed to the kolhozniki, and since these deductions, with the exception of the quantity handed over to the M.T.S., are constant whether the crop be good or bad, the kolhozniki's dividend varies enormously according to the harvest. In 1934 in the kolhozy in nine rayons investigations showed that the average grain dividends varied as follows, according to whether the harvest was good, medium or poor : <sup>(9)</sup>

AVERAGE GRAIN DIVIDEND PER DVOR  
(In Quintals)

	Kolhozy with good Harvests	Kolhozy with Medium Harvests	Kolhozy with Poor Harvests
.     ..	19.4	15.2	12.1
Per cent of total harvest distributed among kolhozniki .	38	33	28

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The highest average dividend in a single rayon for good harvest kolhozy was 45.2 quintals and the lowest average in a single rayon for poor harvest kolhozy was 4.4 quintals.

The dividend in kind distributed among the members of a kolhoz is not the only source of their food supply. While cereal food supplies are derived almost wholly from the dividend in kind, animal products, meat, milk and eggs, are mainly provided by the kolhoznik's own livestock, and a considerable part of his fruit and vegetable food is grown on his private allotment. The following gives an idea of the relative importance of the dividend in kind and home-grown supplies. The figures refer to 181 dvory in seven rayons in 1934. From such a small selection only rough indications can legitimately be drawn.

QUANTITIES PER DVOR RECEIVED FROM (A) DIVIDENDS  
IN KIND ; (B) KOLHOZNIK'S OWN GARDEN ALLOTMENT  
AND LIVESTOCK <sup>(10)</sup>

(In Kilos)

Grain		Potatoes		Vegetables		Fodder (mainly Straw)		Milk		Meat	
A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B (gals)	A	B
2207	59	304	1942	271	949	4363	118	..	253	..	69

Thus these few dvory got 97 per cent of their cereals from the kolhoz and only a negligible fraction from their own allotments. The bulk fodder apart from grazing for their animals also came mainly from the kolhoz, but the kolhozniki would probably devote some of their own garden stuff to the same purpose. Their allotments provided some 86 per cent and 78 per cent respectively of potatoes

and vegetables, and 100 per cent of milk and meat. It would seem that the kolhozniki in the kolhozy covered by the above figures produced at least half the food they consumed ; but it would not be safe to take this as applying to the whole country. Many kolhozy make a distribution of milk and a very large proportion provide communal meals for all working members during the busy seasons. Generally speaking, kolhozniki seem to have a preference for eating their own food in their own homes, but at harvest-time, when there is work for all the women as well as the men, this causes a waste of available labour.

The quantity of grain received for each labour-day varies considerably between different kolhozy. The Soviet Government never publishes any statistical figures from which any reliable estimate of the general standard of consumption can be made, but we have the average number of labour-days per dvor earned in a few selected rayons in 1934 and the average quantity of grain per dvor received on account of labour-days <sup>(11)</sup> which provide the data for calculating the grain value of one labour-day. The amount varied from 1.8 to 4.1 kilos, and averaged just under 3 kilos. The average number of labour-days earned in the year was 184, therefore the average quantity of grain received by each working kolhoznik in return for his year's work was about 550 kilos, worth, at the Government's purchasing price of about R.10 per 100 kilos, about R.55. This can be taken only as a very rough figure since the prices of the different sorts of grain vary considerably, and it is not stated what proportions of the kolhozniki's

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grain dividends consisted of wheat, rye, oats, millet, etc.

The monetary dividend distributed among the members of a kolhoz depends on the total monetary revenue of the kolhoz and the sums required to meet the administrative and working expenses and capital improvement. The following figures <sup>(12)</sup> relating to seven rayons give some idea of the value of one labour-day and the total sum earned by a dvor in 1935 :

Rayon	Monetary Income from Labour-Days		
	Per Dvor	Per Labour-Day	Per Cent of Total Monetary Revenue distributed among the Kolhozniki
Vengerovski .	<i>R.</i> 305	<i>R.</i> 0.52	46.6
Slavianski .	599	1.37	55.5
Vannovski .	171	0.42	25.4
Shpolianski .	205	0.67	49.2
Korsunski .	104	0.34	38.1
V. Khavski .	184	0.45	41.3
Bezhetzki .	585	1.18	54.3
Average .	308	0.71	44.3

We can arrive at the average money earnings of a kolhoznik by multiplying the number of labour-days by the value of one labour-day :

Rayon	Average No. of Labour-Days per Worker in 1935	Average Value of One Labour-Day	Total Earnings
Vengerovski	284.0	<i>R.</i> 0.52	<i>R.</i> 147.68
Slavianski .	224.3	1.37	307.29
Vannovski .	189.2	0.42	79.46
Korsunski .	167.3	0.67	112.09
Shpolianski	162.1	0.34	55.11
V. Khavski .	189.2	0.45	85.14
Bezhetzki .	247.8	1.18	292.40

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The average money earnings through work on the kolhoz works out at R.154, and if to this be added the money value of the average grain dividend, a figure of about R.210 per worker is arrived at, which accounts for by far the greater part of the kolhoznik's dividend as member of the kolhoz. But this does not complete the kolhoznik's income, for there are two other ways in which he can earn money, namely by selling the produce of his own little holding and by working for wages outside the kolhoz. The following table gives the average money receipts in roubles from different sources per dvor in 1934 in 150 dvory distributed among six rayons : <sup>(13)</sup>

(Roubles)					
Labour-Day Dividends	Sale of Produce	Sale of Live Animals	Wages Earned by Outside Work	Other Sources	Total
239·37 12·4%	1111·63 57·4%	295·63 15·3%	123·57 6·4%	165·07 8·5%	1935·27 100%

The sale of produce accounted for appreciably more than half the total income, but part of the produce sold consists of dividends in kind from the kolhoz. According to the details given, of the total sum from the sale of produce R.390·11 per dvor was derived from the sale of grain and R.260·10 from the sale of animal products, excluding the sale of live animals. Grain was derived almost entirely from dividends in kind, animal products from the kolhoznik's own little holding. The sale of other produce, mainly vegetables and fruit, realising R.461·42, must be credited mainly to the kolhoznik's own holding, because, as is shown in the table

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on page 173, over 80 per cent of the total potatoes and other vegetables disposed of by each dvor was derived from its own private holding. If we take the money obtained from the sale of grain plus 20 per cent of the money obtained from the sale of other vegetable products, it appears that the money income of the dvor derived from work on the kolhoz would be —

	R.
Money dividend from labour-days .	239·37
Sale of grain . . . . .	390·11
20 per cent of the value of other vegetable products . . . . .	90·00
	719·48

Thus some 37 per cent of the kolhoznik's total money income seems to have been derived from his share in the divisible surplus of the kolhoz's revenue and 63 per cent from his own property and labour outside the kolhoz. The average number of labour-days earned in a year may be 200 (it must be remembered that many kolhozniki earn more than one labour-day for a full day's work), and if this be taken as representing the same number of days' employment, it seems that the kolhoznik earns much less for a unit of time worked on the kolhoz farm than he can earn in the same period on his own initiative.

The foregoing should not be regarded as typical for the whole of the U.S.S.R. In the first place, the figures refer to a very tiny fraction of the country and an infinitesimal fraction of the total kolhozy and kolhoznik dvory. In the second place,

the various kolhozy investigated were certainly considerably above the average (later on we shall try to calculate the average kolhoznik income for the whole country). One thing stands out very prominently, the enormous difference there must be between the circumstances of the kolhozniki. In some kolhozy the kolhozniki get twice or three times as much money for a labour-day as in other kolhozy, while the difference between the grain dividend is even greater, ranging from less than 2 kilos to about 10 kilos per labour-day. It is possible for a kolhoz to distribute a comparatively small grain dividend and, through selling a good deal more than it is compelled to part with, pay a larger money dividend ; but the following table shows no such inverse relation between money and grain dividend :

(MONEY AND GRAIN DIVIDENDS PER DVOR IN 1934) <sup>(14)</sup>

Rayon	Money Dividend per Dvor	Grain Dividend per Dvor
	Roubles	Quintals
Slavianski . .	335·4	14·90
Vengerovski . .	276·5	15·01
Gulkevichski . .	231·0	18·40
Vannovski . .	173·9	6·13
Bezhetzki . .	171·7	8·80
Shpolianski . .	148·2	36·10
Korsunski . .	113·4	15·90
Bezhenchukski . .	65·5	11·00
V. Havski . .	64·1	8·70
Uvarovski . .	58·2	6·50
Kupinski . .	50·9	21·40

The four rayons with the highest money dividends have an average grain dividend of 13·6 quintals compared with 11·9 quintals in the four rayons with the lowest money dividends, while the three

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rayons with medium money dividends show grain dividends of over 20 quintals. The total money income varied between an average of R.3261 per dvor in Gulkevichski rayon and R.1372 in V. Havski rayon.

Much better paid than the rank-and-file kol-hozniki are the tractor-drivers and mechanics who handle the machines of the M.T.S. A decree issued in May 1938 laid down the following rates : \*

	Depth of Furrow		
	18 Centimetres and under	Over 18 and not exceeding 20 Centimetres	Over 20 Centimetres
Stalingrad tractors :	Labour-Days	Labour-Days	Labour-Days
For 1st hectare	0.50	0.55	0.65
„ 2nd „	0.70	0.80	0.90
„ 3rd „	1.20	1.30	1.60
For 4th and subsequent hectares	1.70	1.90	2.20
Cheliabinsk tractors :			
For 1st three hectares	1.00	1.20	1.40
„ 2nd „	1.50	1.80	2.10
„ 3rd „	2.50	3.00	3.50
For every hectare over 9	1.10	1.40	1.70

*Note.*— Tractors manufactured at the Stalingrad works are ordinary wheeled machines, the Cheliabinsk works turn out caterpillar tractors much more powerful than the others.

\* See Appendix II.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### STATE EXACTIONS AND TAXATION

#### (A) DELIVERIES IN KIND

THE kolhozniki's share in the net yield of their farm is distributed last, after the State has taken its portion and a further portion has been set aside for the needs of the farm itself. During N.E.P. the State left the exchange of goods between town and country largely to private enterprise. But the bulk of the grain surplus available for feeding the urban and industrial population was bought by the State ; for, as we have seen in a previous chapter, the peasants were compelled to sell to the State because many obstacles were put in the way of private corn dealers. There was, however, no direct compulsion on the peasants to sell a definite proportion of their crops. The situation was changed by the First Five-Year Plan, which upset the equilibrium between the needs of the non-agricultural population and the quantity of food the peasants were willing to part with. The absolute numbers and the relative size of the non-agricultural population to the whole rapidly increased ; but the peasants were unwilling to increase their deliveries of food without getting something in return. And, because so great a proportion of the country's industrial resources and labour were allotted to the creation of capital goods, the Government was unable to

increase the supply of manufactured goods which the peasants desired.

Collectivisation was decided upon partly in order to facilitate the State collection of food. In the same way as the general organisation of the kolhozy, the methods by which the State obtained its quota of agricultural produce were gradually evolved after the kolhoz had become the predominant form of agricultural enterprise. Up to 1933 there were three different ways in which the State obtained foodstuffs and raw material: of these the first and most important was the general plan of deliveries covering grain, cotton, sugar beet, etc. In every region a standard percentage of the crop to be surrendered to the State was fixed. In the Ukraine the proportion was 33 per cent, in the Crimea 28 per cent and so on. These percentages, however, were not taken from the actual realised crops, but the quantities to be delivered were fixed before the harvest by assessment committees in every district, who estimated on the spot the probable harvest yield. The assessment committees rather naturally were inclined to err in favour of the State and on the whole overestimated the yields.

The second way of obtaining grain was the so-called counter-planning, which in effect meant getting the kolhozy themselves to increase their deliveries over the official plan. The president of a kolhoz called a general meeting of members and proposed that the farm make a voluntary increase in the planned deliveries. The president, being in effect a Government nominee, was usually more concerned about his party reputation than with

safeguarding the interests of the kolhozniki, and the latter were too well aware of the risks of opposing a resolution ostensibly prompted by party loyalty.

The third method was the so-called contract system. Contracts were made with kolhozy and independent peasants by Government organs or State enterprises under which the producer undertook to deliver a certain percentage of the harvest at a fixed price. These contracts were made in respect both to crops subject to planned deliveries and to crops the whole of which the producers were theoretically free to dispose of. One form of contract, known as a commercial contract, merely laid down the quantity of produce to be delivered, the time of delivery and price. Another form of contract, known as a production contract, bound the purchasing organisation to deliver to the producers manufactured goods, both for production purposes, such as farm implements, building material, fertilisers, etc., and consumption goods for the use of the peasants themselves. Sometimes a contract of this sort included a money credit granted by the purchasing organisation to the producers to finance growing the crop. This form of contract had some positive influence in inducing peasants to join kolhozy. Owing to the universal shortage of manufactured goods money alone was of little use, and it often happened that the members of kolhozy were the only inhabitants of the district who had any prospect of obtaining even a minimum of such goods as textiles, leather, nails and other things that are indispensable to the peasant household. Nominally contracts were voluntary, but in practice

the kolhozy had little choice in the matter and no power at all to negotiate about prices, which were fixed by the Government.

Although the kolhozy were not allowed much discretion whether or not to dispose of their surplus produce under contracts to State organisations, local conditions were allowed to influence contracting to a certain extent. Generally speaking, the more remote from a market centre the greater was the proportion of surplus produce that was sold under contract. The officially recognised and controlled kolhoz markets were first organised in the spring of 1933, but before then the sale of farm produce to the non-agricultural population, though nominally illegal, was tolerated by the authorities in most country townships. The prices obtained by direct sale to the consumer were, of course, far higher than the prices fixed by the Government, and this enabled the kolhozniki to buy manufactured goods on the open market in the town at prices also much higher than the prices charged in the State and co-operative shops. In remote districts the kolhozniki were the more ready to sell their produce at the low contract prices, because they were almost entirely dependent for their supply of manufactured goods on the undertaking of the other party to the contract to supply them. In principle the contracts provided that the State enterprise buying the kolhozy's produce must provide manufactured goods to three times the value of the produce bought. But it is doubtful whether many kolhozy or kolhozniki ever had enough money to enable them to take full advantage of this provision, and, judging by complaints voiced

in the press at the time, the contractual obligations of the purchasing enterprises in this respect were more often in default than honoured. It would also appear that purchasing enterprises were by no means always prompt payers, for instructions were frequently issued by the Central Government enjoining organisations to pay their overdue debts to the kolhozy.

The original system of planned deliveries and contracts did not prove very satisfactory, largely because the peasants were not treated fairly by the State collecting organisations and other contracting enterprises. The proportion of the crops covered by the planned deliveries was high, but not impossibly high given an average to good harvest, but the local collecting authorities nearly always increased the amount by making exaggerated estimates of the harvest yield and had a habit of increasing their demands after the plan had been made. They were especially prone to demanding additional quantities from kolhozy with a relatively good harvest to make up for deficiencies in the deliveries of other kolhozy whose harvest turned out badly, making it physically impossible for them to fulfil their planned deliveries. The great fault was that, under the annual central plan for agricultural deliveries, each district and region was assessed individually and the local authorities were charged with the duty of seeing that the planned quantities were realised. The central authorities made no allowance for bad harvests and accepted no excuses from the local collecting organisations. On the other hand, over-fulfilment of the plan was counted a virtue, and the officials who succeeded

in squeezing additional deliveries from the peasants were noted as good, energetic and loyal servants of the Soviet. It also frequently happened that the plans for different districts were so drawn up that some districts were expected to deliver a much larger proportion of their produce than others.

At the end of 1932 a new system of compulsory deliveries was devised. Fixed quantities of grain, meat and certain other staple products, per unit of cultivated land or per head of livestock, were laid down for each region. Every kolhoz was compelled to deliver its quotas, for which it received payment at the State's fixed purchasing price, nominally based on the estimated cost of production. The prices paid were, however, extremely low in comparison with the prices of manufactured goods bought by the peasants. These compulsory deliveries are generally and appropriately referred to as a tax in kind, because the State obtains a very large part of its budget revenue by the sale at greatly inflated prices to the consuming population of the produce it has bought cheaply from the producers.

By fixing the absolute quantity of produce the kolhoz has to deliver to the State and strictly forbidding any counter-plans or additional demands by the local collecting agencies, it was supposed that the kolhozy would be more inclined to try to increase their production. Under the former system there was certainly not a great incentive to try to improve yields nor to bring more land under cultivation, because in practice the collecting authorities generally saw to it that the State in

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one way or another eventually obtained the whole surplus over and above the producers' minimum consumption requirements. The new scheme meant that, after the kolhoz had fulfilled its fixed liabilities to the State, it could deal with the residue of its produce as it thought best.

The following shows the grain delivery quotas for several of the chief grain-producing regions. Since 1936 there have been no important changes.

COMPULSORY DELIVERIES OF GRAIN BY KOLHOZY  
SERVED BY M.T.S.

(In Quintals per Hectare)

Region	Average Harvest Yield, 1928-30	Quantities Delivered			
		1933	1934	1935	1936
Ukraine . .	9.0	3.1	3.1	2.3	2.0
Central Black Earth . .	8.4	3.0	2.2	2.1 <sup>1</sup>	1.7 <sup>1</sup>
North Caucasus .	7.0	2.5	2.5	1.9	1.7
Middle Volga .	6.3	2.3	2.3	1.7 <sup>2</sup>	1.4 <sup>2</sup>
Lower Volga .	6.1	2.2	2.2	1.6 <sup>3</sup>	1.6 <sup>3</sup>
Western Province	9.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.6

<sup>1</sup> Average of Kursk and Voronezh Provinces

<sup>2</sup> Stalingrad Province.

<sup>3</sup> Kuibyshevsk Province.

The Western Province is not like the other regions, a surplus grain-producing area. Though the grain yield, mainly rye and oats, is high, the area planted with grain is comparatively small. If the State collected a high percentage of the harvest it would have to return a large part for local consumption, whereas the State collections from the other regions are transported to the industrial areas to feed the large concentrations of non-agricultural

population. Excluding the Western Province, the percentage of compulsory delivery to gross harvest averaged in 1933 about 35 per cent, and in 1936 about 23 per cent. It would seem that the Government became more generous as time went on, but probably the most potent reason for the reduction in the quotas was the stark fact that the early quotas were absolutely too high and left the agricultural population with insufficient grain to cover their minimum needs. As a matter of fact, the whole planned quantity was almost certainly not collected in 1933 nor in 1934; or if it was, a proportion had afterwards to be given back to the growers. From references, usually more or less oblique, in the press to agricultural developments it became apparent that in 1933 and 1934, and certainly in 1936 if not in 1935, the Government had to provide many kolhozy with seed grain for the next harvest. In the spring of 1937 a special decree was issued cancelling quota arrears due on the 1936 harvest and outstanding repayments of seed loans. In many parts of Eastern and Southern Russia 1936 was a very dry year and the harvest in the drought areas was considerably below average. On the whole it may be taken that the present scale of compulsory grain deliveries represents a quantity that the average kolhozy can surrender out of an average harvest without feeling a pinch, but that in a poor year like 1936 or 1938, in which drought again appeared, the deliveries are more than the kolhozy can surrender without reducing their own normal consumption.

The following table shows the quantity of grain procured by the Government, including addi-

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tional purchases (*zakoupka*), throughout the whole country.

	Million Tons	Per Cent of Gross Harvest
1928	12·4	16·9
1929	16·3	22·7
1930	22·6	27·0
1931	22·7	32·7
1932	19·2	27·5
1933	23·1	28·9
1934	26·3	31·1

In 1913 some 21 million tons out of a total grain harvest of 80·1 million tons, or about 26 per cent of the total harvest, was marketed, but the 1913 harvest was above the average. Between 1930 and 1934 the Government collections and purchases exceeded this proportion. Since 1934 the Soviet Government has issued neither planned nor realised figures of grain collections, and though the compulsory quotas were reduced all round, purchases were increased and the proportion of total collections to the gross harvest probably did not vary very widely.

Grain, though by far the most important crop subject to compulsory deliveries, is not the only one. Quotas are also imposed on sunflower seeds, potatoes, beans, wool, meat, butter and milk. Other products, mainly so-called industrial crops such as cotton, flax and sugar beet, are subject to contractual deliveries which differ mainly in name but little in principle from compulsory deliveries.

In 1933 all independent peasants had to supply 40 to 50 kilos of meat to the Government and all kolhozniki from 25 to 32 kilos when their kolhoz

had no separate livestock department, and 15 to 25 kilos when their kolhoz had a livestock department. Apparently it made no difference whether the independent peasant or kolhoznik actually possessed any livestock or not. A decree dated 23rd November 1936 categorically stated that meat quotas were due from kolhozniki irrespective of their possession of livestock. The same decree gave full details of the manner of calculating meat deliveries, fixed the dates of deliveries, the penalties for non-delivery, etc., omitting only to give any indication of the quantities actually due from kolhozy or kolhozniki. Why the absolute quantities in meat deliveries and the prices paid for compulsory deliveries of any sort of produce should be kept secret is hard to imagine.

In January 1938 another decree on meat deliveries was issued, stating that the quantities would be the same as for 1937, but deliveries were to be required only from kolhozniki who possessed livestock. Apparently so much was required in respect to every cow, pig and sheep owned by the kolhoznik. The only clue to these quantities was contained in a decree relating to deliveries in 1933 by kolhozy in which the following amounts were laid down :

From kolhozy possessing a dairy herd	.	30 kilos per cow
„ „ breeding cattle for meat	.	30 kilos per head
		of all cattle
„ „ „ pigs	.	120 kilos per sow
„ „ „ sheep	.	10 kilos per ewe

Kolhozniki certainly are not required to deliver meat to the full quantities enumerated above, and it is known that the scale of meat deliveries gener-

ally has been reduced in the meantime, as it was found that the original scale was preventing a satisfactory increase in the total head of livestock.

Compulsory deliveries of milk were fixed for 1934 as follows :

(In Litres per Cow per Year)			
Cows belonging to kolhozy	Cows belonging to kolhozniki		Cows belonging to Independent Peasants
	In Kolhozy possessing a Dairy Herd	In Kolhozy not possessing a Dairy Herd	
350 — 580	50 — 180	75 — 220	120 — 280

The highest quotas applied to the northern regions, the Urals, Western Siberia, etc., where milk production has always been highly developed — the lowest quotas to the steppe country and the Central Asian steppes, where cattle are kept mainly for meat production and for draught purposes.

The average milk yield per cow in State stock farms in 1934 was 845 litres, and since the best cattle, including imported pedigree stock, were to be found in State farms, the average yield in kolhozy was presumably less. It may therefore be calculated that more than half the milk produced by kolhoz dairy herds was delivered to the State and not less than 15 per cent of the milk produced by the private cows belonging to kolhozniki.

Contractual deliveries of industrial raw material are based on a fixed quantity per hectare under the crop. For example, the decree for deliveries of flax and hemp in 1938 fixes quantities ranging from 40 to 170 kilos of flax fibre and from 35 to 90 kilos of linseed per hectare, according to districts. All kolhozy who grow this crop have to deliver the

relative quantity of fibre and linseed from every hectare planted, receiving payment at the Government's fixed price. For deliveries in excess of the contractual quantity they receive from twice to four times the fixed price; the larger the contractual quantity per hectare the larger is the premium paid for excess deliveries. As the contractual deliveries per hectare apparently amount to only half or less than half of the yield in normal circumstances, the premiums received for exceeding planned deliveries are very considerable. It must, however, be remembered that there is no alternative market for industrial raw material, whereas the open market prices for food products such as milk, butter, meat, fruit and vegetables are from five to ten times more than the prices paid by the Government for compulsory deliveries. The Government collecting prices, including premiums, for deliveries of industrial raw material seem at first sight relatively higher than the prices paid for grain and foodstuffs generally. That is to say the kolhozy get more money per hectare under cotton, flax, etc., than from a hectare under grain, potatoes, etc. But the real comparison is not so easy to determine. The members of a kolhoz whose main crop consists of cotton, flax or sugar beet may receive a higher money income than members of a kolhoz growing grain, but they have to buy their grain, flour or bread for their own needs at the State's fixed retail prices, which are very high, while the food-producing kolhoz supplies its members with foodstuffs so that they have correspondingly less to buy. It is impossible to say who, all things considered, is better off, the kolhoznik

belonging to a food-producing or to a raw-material-producing kolhoz.

(B) MONEY TAXES

Taxation of the peasant population also takes a money form, though this falls less heavily than the deliveries in kind. The following shows the share of the total Union budget revenue falling on the peasant population and the amounts derived from deliveries in kind and money taxes :

	(Millions of Roubles)		
	1935	1936	1937
Total budget revenue .	63,600	78,700	98,100
Turnover tax on agricultural deliveries . . . .	24,000	25,400	24,106
Turnover tax on food products and alcohol . . . .	13,549	17,585	26,577
Agricultural tax on Kolhozy .	262	450	530
Agricultural tax on kolhozniki and independent peasants . . . .	753	650	650
Total peasant taxation .	38,564	44,085	51,863
Per cent of total budget revenue . . . .	60.6	56.0	52.9

The turnover tax on agricultural deliveries is paid by collecting organisations to the exchequer and recovered from the manufacturing enterprises such as flour mills, cotton mills, canning factories, distilleries and breweries, in the prices they pay for their raw material. These manufacturing enterprises have in their turn to pay a tax on their finished output, which in turn is passed on to the trading organisations. Thus the turnover tax on the raw material and the finished goods is eventu-

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ally paid by the consumer in the retail price. In a sense the consumer may be said to pay the turnover tax, but he is willing to pay high prices because his demand is intense and in conditions of an open market prices would be equally high and the producer of the raw material would obtain a correspondingly higher price than that fixed by the Government. The State, by virtue of its trade monopoly, is in a position to collect a high rate of turnover tax (or monopoly profit) because it can arbitrarily depress the price paid to the producer for the raw material. In other words the turnover tax is rather the result of compelling the agricultural producer to hand over produce at an artificially depressed price, than the result of compelling the consumer to pay an inflated price. The consumer is able to pay the higher price because he gets a commensurate wage from the State, thus whichever way it be regarded the peasant is discriminated against.

The amount of direct money taxation on agriculture since the end of N.E.P. has been —

	(In Millions of Roubles)		
	Kolhoz Tax	Tax on kolhozniki and Independent Peasants	Total
1928-29	10	440	450
1929-30	21	385	406
1931	77	381	458
1932	121	337	458
1933	223	548	771
1934	247	564	811
1935	262	753	1,015
1936	450	650	1,100
1937	530	650	1,180

In 1933 there was a noticeable jump in the total,

mainly due to a large increase in the amount paid by the kolhozniki individually and the independent peasants. At the end of 1932 the Government changed its policy towards private trading and gave official encouragement to the formation of open peasant markets in which the individual kolhozniki and independent peasants, as well as the kolhozy in their collective capacity, might sell produce direct to the consumer at whatever prices were formed by supply and demand. This concession made a great difference to the money income of the agricultural population, because the open market prices were ten times or more the Government's official prices for the same commodities. From the beginning of 1935 bread and cereals, and from 1st October 1935 nearly all other foodstuffs, were removed from the ration list and were thenceforward sold at single retail prices roughly about midway between the former ration and commercial prices. This increased the cost of living to the agricultural population, because even the grain-growing peasants bought certain foodstuffs such as sugar and preserves, while the non-grain-growing peasants had to buy even grain and cereals. Formerly certain quantities of these goods had been supplied to the peasant population at the comparatively cheap ration prices. To compensate the peasants for the increased cost of their purchases of consumable goods, the prices paid to them for compulsory deliveries was raised, on grain by about 10 per cent and on industrial raw material by considerably more. This again raised the average money income of the agricultural population, with the result that the tax yield in 1935

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again showed a marked increase over the previous year.

During the years immediately following mass collectivisation the agricultural tax payable by kolhozy consisted of a fixed sum per hectare under different crops. Thus, in the R.S.F.S.R. the rates on the principal crops were fixed for 1934 as follows :

	(Roubles per Hectare)
On land under grain . .	1.90
„ „ potatoes . .	3.70
„ „ flax . .	1.50
„ „ tobacco . .	10.00
„ „ vegetables . .	15.50
„ „ fruit . .	24.00
„ „ vineyards . .	30.00

These sums represented only a small fraction of the gross yield. For example the average grain yield was about 8 quintals per hectare, worth, even at the Government's lowest purchasing price, some R.60 to R.80, according to the sort of grain.

In 1936 this system was altered to an income tax based on the kolhoz's total money income and produce valued at the State purchasing price, as shown in the previous year's accounts. On its gross income the kolhoz was required to pay 3 per cent. As the yield of the tax in 1936 showed a marked increase over 1935, it would seem that the former tax on the land under crops came to considerably less than 3 per cent of the gross value of the crop. In addition kolhozy paid turnover tax at the prescribed rates on any products of their industrial enterprises. Thus a kolhoz would pay

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the turnover tax on butter produced by its own dairy, on wine and spirits produced in its own distillery.

Kolhozniki who possess no resources outside their share in the collective property of their kolhoz pay no money tax. Those enjoying an independent income from their own allotments or from handicrafts, excluding money earned as wages or payments for services, paid under the law of 1934 from R.15 to R.30 per dvor ; the precise amount within these limits being fixed by the local Government authority. Independent peasants were assessed according to a scale of imaginary revenue produced by different crops and the imaginery income derived from animals. For the R.S.F.S.R. the figures were —

REVENUE FROM EVERY HECTARE					R.
Under grain	.	.	.	.	267
„ vegetables	.	.	.	.	540
„ potatoes	.	.	.	.	160
„ tobacco	.	.	.	.	360
„ grape vines	.	.	.	.	850
„ fruit	.	.	.	.	520
„ meadows	.	.	.	.	28

REVENUE FROM ANIMALS					R.
Per horse, camel or mule	.	.	.	.	23
„ cow or bull	.	.	.	.	23
„ ox	.	.	.	.	12
„ ass	.	.	.	.	6
„ sheep or goat	.	.	.	.	2.5

From the total revenue calculated on the above basis the independent peasant had to pay —

On incomes up to R.200 — R.25.

On incomes between R.200 and R.300 — R.25 + 5 per cent of any sum over R.200.

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On incomes between R.300 and R.400 — R.30 + 15 per cent of any sum over R.300.

On incomes between R.400 and R.500 — R.45 + 20 per cent of any sum over R.400.

On incomes between R.500 and R.700 — R.65 + 30 per cent of any sum over R.500.

On incomes over R.700 — R.125 + 35 per cent of any sum over R.700.

Peasants classed as kulaks paid as follows on their actual income :

Over R.1000 up to R.3000 — R.350 + 50 per cent of the sum in excess of R.1000.

R.3000 up to R.6000 — R.1350 + 60 per cent of the sum in excess of R.3000.

Over R.6000 — R.3150 + 70 per cent of the sum in excess of R.6000.

Apparently a kulak was in principle a peasant having an income of R.1000 or more a year, *i.e.* about the same as the lower-paid ranks of unskilled industrial labour. But it was left to the republican governments and the provincial executive committees to determine the precise qualifications of a kulak according to local conditions.

Independent peasants, in addition to the agricultural tax, had to pay tax at the standard rate on their earnings from handicraft and the yield from sales of produce on the open peasant market, up to a maximum of 30 per cent of the whole of the rest of their taxable income.

In 1936 the tax on kolhozniki possessing independent sources of income was amended to a fixed sum per *dvor* varying from R.25 in the poorest and most primitive regions such as Kazakhstan, Buriat-Mongolia and the Kalmuck Autonomous Republic, to R.45 in the Moscow and Kalinin provinces.

In 1937 the agricultural tax on the private

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resources of kolhozniki was again amended to rates varying between R.10 and R.50 per dvor, the actual rate within these limits being fixed by the republican governments for each province and area within their own territory.

In 1937 the assessment rates for independent peasants were raised as follows :

## ASSESSED INCOME FROM LAND AND ANIMALS IN THE R.S.F.S.R.

Per hectare of land under grain	.	.	R	80
„ „ „ vegetables	.	.	675	
„ „ „ potatoes	.	.	210	
„ „ „ tobacco	.	.	400	
„ „ „ fruit	.	.	675	
„ „ „ grape vines	.	.	1100	
„ „ „ meadows	.	.	28	
„ „ „ cotton on irri-	.	.		
gated lands	.	.	220	
„ „ „ sugar beet	.	.	100	
„ „ „ hemp	.	.	250	
„ „ „ flax	.	.	200	
Per horse, camel or mule	.	.	.	120
„ cow	.	.	.	105
„ ox or bull	.	.	.	55
„ ass	.	.	.	15
„ sheep or goat	.	.	.	5

The rate of tax was amended to the following :

Up to R.100	.	.	.	R.	15
From R.101 to R.125	.	.	.		17
„ R.126 to R.150	.	.	.		20

and so on at a rising scale up to —

R.776 to R.800	.	.	R.	196 then
From R.801 to R.1000	.	.	200 + 40 per cent of all sums	
			exceeding R.800	

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From R.1000 to R. 2000	R. 280 + 44 per cent of all sums exceeding R.1000
,, R.2000 to R.3000	720 + 48 per cent of all sums exceeding R.2000
Over R.3000	. 1200 + 55 per cent of all sums exceeding R.3000

The income tax payable by kolhozniki on their earnings from non-agricultural pursuits or from work performed outside the kolhoz is not a heavy burden. As workers in industrial enterprises they would, according to the income tax law of March 1936, pay R.0.90 on a monthly wage between R.140 and R.145, and another 5 kopeks for every R.5 increase in wage up to R.600, when the tax becomes a flat rate of 3.3 per cent. Kolhozniki privately making handicraft goods for sale or not working under trade-union conditions, as for instance for private employers, would apparently pay a flat rate of 2.5 per cent for any income up to R.1000. In addition to the income tax, kolhozniki earning wages in State enterprises would have to pay certain union dues.

The above concludes the list of all union or centralised taxation, but local taxes are collected by provincial governments and village soviets collect something in the nature of rural rates. The amount of these local taxes is of course a matter for the local government and there is insufficient information to indicate the extent of the burden on the kolhoznik. But as the total revenue, excluding sums transferred from the All-Union budget, of the autonomous budgets of the separate republics is not much more than 10 per cent of the All-Union budget, local taxation would presumably

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be considerably less than All-Union taxation.

Finally there is so-called "voluntary taxation", which includes subscriptions to the State loan and levies for local cultural and social needs, such as building and equipping schools, clubs, etc. In practice the sums to be subscribed are fixed by the local party committee and the kolhozniki have no choice but to vote in favour of the resolution.

The percentage of the average kolhoz and kolhoznik money income taken by obligatory and "voluntary" taxation in recent years was — <sup>(15)</sup>

	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Kolhozy . . .	12·6	..	7·9	..	8·3
Kolhozniki . . .	..	10·7	9·7	8·7	5·8

The pre-War peasant <sup>(16)</sup> had to pay somewhere about 18 per cent of his money income in taxation and other dues, including rent of any land he leased in addition to his nadiel. But he received the full market price for all the produce he brought to market.

## CHAPTER XIX

### VOLUNTARY SALES OF PRODUCE

#### (A) THE OPEN MARKET

IN April 1932 the Government issued a decree for the organisation of open markets in which the kolhozy, kolhozniki and independent peasants might sell the produce of their farms direct to the consumer at whatever prices were formed by the reaction of supply and demand. In so far as trade in foodstuffs had been previously allowed, it was on condition that the prices charged to the consumer were no higher than the prices charged for similar goods in State shops.

The decree abolished all existing taxes and local tolls on the sale of farm produce in market-places, at railway stations, etc., and fixed dues ranging from R.0.20 to R.1.00 per day payable by the sellers to cover the cost of the maintenance and cleaning of the market-place. It instructed local authorities to reduce to a minimum the rent charged for booths, kiosks, etc.; laid down that the receipts of kolhozy and kolhozniki from the sale of produce were not subject to the agricultural tax, while the receipts of independent peasants were to be taxed in a sum not exceeding 30 per cent of their gross income from trade of all sorts.

A turnover tax of 3 per cent was payable on the gross receipts of kolhozy from the sale of produce from kiosks, booths, etc., but not apparently on the sale of produce direct from carts. The same privileges as were enjoyed by kolhozy selling farm produce were extended to other associations and collective organisations occupying kiosks, booths, etc., for the sale of their own products. This provision allowed co-operative manufacturing and handicraft enterprises to sell their own products, such as clothing, furniture, earthenware, household utensils, tools, etc., alongside the peasants selling foodstuffs, to the mutual advantage of both as well as of the ordinary consumer. The prices of such goods were not to be higher than the average prices for similar goods in the State commercial shops.

“Speculation”, that is in Soviet terminology buying anything for resale and not for personal consumption, was prohibited. Strictly speaking it was illegal even for one kolhoznik to sell the produce of another; nobody was supposed to bring to market anything except what he had grown or produced himself. Although it would seem a waste of time for a kolhoznik to spend a day taking a dozen eggs or a gallon of milk to market, when he might be earning a labour-day on the farm or working on his own allotment, he was not allowed to hand the most insignificant quantity to a neighbour to sell for him. Of course this rule could not be strictly enforced. Even as late as 12th October 1938 an article appeared in *Pravda* complaining of speculation in the markets, not only by professional speculators but also by ordinary kolhozniki

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who include their neighbours' produce with their own.

In the large towns the municipal authorities have built or restored covered market halls with bare tables, open booths, kiosks and small shops in aisles or avenues, on the same lines as the markets found in nearly every large continental town and in some English towns. As a general rule the individual kolhozniki and peasants content themselves with an open booth or a few feet of space on a trestle table, while the kolhozy, having naturally a good deal more to offer than a single kolhoznik, permanently rent kiosks or shops. The best market halls possess cold-storage space in which, for a small fee, perishable goods unsold at the end of the day may be stored. This facility is especially appreciated by kolhozy who send supplies to distant markets, for the largest towns in the Union, such as Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev, are not dependent solely on the kolhozy within a small radius for their market supplies. Kolhozy as far away as the Caucasus and Central Asia rent kiosks in the Union and many republican capital cities to which they despatch weekly consignments of fruit, vegetables, and even meat and fish by train, if necessary in refrigerated wagons.

Although the original idea behind the decision to organise an open market was to provide facilities for the kolhozy to sell their surplus foodstuffs direct to the consuming public, the kolhozy seem to have been slow to take advantage of the concession. Of the total turnover in 28 large towns, sales by kolhozy amounted <sup>(17)</sup> in 1933 to 9.3 per

cent, in 1934 to 9.9 per cent, in 1935 to 10.7 per cent and in the first quarter of 1936 to 12.7 per cent.

In all open markets and bazaars throughout the Union the kolhozy in 1935 supplied only 15 per cent of the turnover while the kolhozniki and independent peasants supplied 85 per cent.<sup>(18)</sup> A large part of the goods brought to market by the kolhozniki, however, consisted of produce distributed to them by their kolhozy on account of their labour-day dividends. The following table shows the origin of foodstuffs sold on the open market : <sup>(19)</sup>

	Per Cent
Produce of kolhozy sold by kolhozy .	15
„ „ „ kolhozniki	45
„ kolhozniki's own livestock and allotments . . .	30
Produce of independent peasants .	10
	100

In 1932 the turnover on the open market amounted to R.7500 million and in 1935 to R.14,500 million.<sup>(20)</sup> Since prices fell considerably during the interval, the quantity of produce brought to market in 1935 was much more than double the quantity in 1932. Nevertheless open market prices remained at a very high level. In 1934 the open market turnover in terms of money was over 20 per cent of the total retail turnover,<sup>(21)</sup> but in volume it was very much smaller, the proportion of the total marketable surplus of various commodities sold on the open market being —

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### PROPORTION OF TOTAL MARKETABLE SURPLUS SOLD ON THE OPEN MARKET <sup>(22)</sup>

	1933	1934	1935
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Cereals . . .	3·3	3·8	5·1
Meat . . .	14·4	13·7	17·0
Dairy products .	29·8	30·4	32·4
Potatoes . .	12·6	15·8	19·4
Vegetables . .	11·4	11·7	12·6

In 1934 rationed staple foodstuffs and manufactured consumption goods were still sold by the State at comparatively moderate prices, while in the so-called "commercial" shops the same goods were sold without restriction at very much higher prices. The open market prices were at least as high as the "commercial" prices of similar goods.

### RATION OR "NORMAL" PRICES AND "COMMERCIAL" PRICES IN 1934 <sup>(23)</sup>

	Normal	Commercial
	R.	R.
Bread (rye) . .	0·50 per kg.	1·50 per kg.
„ (wheat) . .	0·60 „	3·00 „
Beef . . .	3·28 „	5·70 „
Butter . . .	8·00 „	27·00 „

The kolhozniki clearly had a great incentive to bring produce to market, since the prices realised enabled them to buy manufactured consumers' goods in the town "commercial" shops, though the prices were (in 1934) from 50 to 100 per cent dearer than in the closed ration shops, in which the peasants, not possessing ration books, could not make purchases.

In 1935 rationing was abolished and the State

reverted to a policy of restricting demand to supply by means of price. Consumption goods were henceforth sold to all comers at a single price, which, in the case of foodstuffs at least, were roughly half-way between the old ration and commercial prices. Prices on the open market naturally had to be brought down into line with the new State retail prices, and therefore the turnover of the open market in terms of money in 1935 did not show any appreciable increase over 1934, though the volume of turnover continued to expand. But the drop in prices realised by the kolhozniki was compensated by a drop in the prices they had to pay for their purchases of manufactured goods. According to figures given at the Communist Party's 18th Congress in March 1939, the value of open market turnover in foodstuffs in 1938 was R.24,399 million, which was about 15 per cent of the total value of all retail trade, including public feeding, for the whole country compared with about 12 or 13 per cent in 1936 and 1937. Private enterprise in trade is more than holding its own in competition with State trade and, what is more, the Bolshevik leaders quote with satisfaction increases in the turnover of this form of private trade.

An interesting comparison is that between the open market turnover of about R.14,000 million in 1934 and the value of the country's total agricultural produce given as R.14,600 million <sup>(24)</sup> in the same year. The latter, it must be explained, was calculated at the price level of 1926-27 and refers not to marketable or surplus agricultural output only, but to the gross output including everything consumed on the farms themselves. Of

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the gross agricultural output certainly not much more than one-third was surplus to the consumption and production needs of the actual producers, and of this third probably not less than 85 per cent was taken by the Government in compulsory deliveries, decentralised collections and *zakoupka*; therefore in volume the open market turnover could not be more than some 5 to 6 per cent of total agricultural production. This gives some indication of the rise in the retail price level, or fall in the purchasing price of the rouble. In 1926-27 prices were not yet absolutely fixed by the Government but were in principle the result of the interplay of market conditions, only the Government to some extent artificially depressed the price of grain, not by requisitioning grain supplies, but by preventing competition by private traders (see Chapter XIII). On the whole the peasants were willing, though not enthusiastic, to sell their surplus produce at the prices ruling at the time, whereas in 1934 they had to be compelled to surrender a fixed portion of their crops to the State at the latter's arbitrary price, which seems on the average to have been about double the free prices obtained in 1926-27. In view of the above it is not surprising to find that open market sales of farm produce in 1935 accounted for nearly 25 per cent of the whole money income of the rural population, in actual figures R.10,783 million out of R.43,646 million,<sup>(25)</sup> and the latter figure includes the earnings of rural population engaged in industry and other non-agricultural pursuits. So far as the aggregate yield from the sale of agricultural produce was concerned the figures were :

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	R. million
Income from compulsory deliveries to the State . . . . .	7,370
Income from decentralised collections . . . . .	1,344
Income from open market sales . . . . .	10,783
	19,497

Thus the sale on the open market of less than 20 per cent of the marketable surplus yielded a higher sum of money than the sale of all the rest of the marketable surplus to the State and State organisations.

(B) DECENTRALISED COLLECTIONS AND  
STATE PURCHASES

“Decentralised collections” is the term used to define sales by kolhozy and kolhozniki to State enterprises and local organisations. State purchases, or *zakoupka*, are purchases by the State collecting organisations of additional quantities of grain and other crops subject to compulsory delivery, after the compulsory quota has been fulfilled.

The system of decentralised collection and *zakoupka* was fully described in the author's previous book, *Soviet Trade and Distribution*, Chapter XVIII, and it seems unnecessary to repeat the details in full. Briefly, institutions such as hotels and hospitals, manufacturing enterprises having restaurants for their workers, retailing organisations and in some circumstances food-manufacturing enterprises, receive licences to buy direct from kolhozy or indirectly through consumers' co-

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operative associations. As a rule the purchasing organisation makes a contract with one or more kolhozy or with co-operative associations in the area allotted to it, for the supply of a given quantity of produce during the year. When contracts are made with co-operative associations, these must in turn make contracts with kolhozy or even kolhozniki for the supplies they have to deliver to their principals.

The prices paid for decentralised collections are considerably lower than prices on the open market, though higher than those paid by the State for compulsory deliveries. On the whole they must be regarded as distinctly unfavourable to the producer when considered in relation to the retail prices of manufactured consumption goods. Nominally kolhozy and kolhozniki are at liberty to decide whether to dispose of surplus produce on the open market or as decentralised collections ; but the fact that a plan of decentralised collections is always drawn up by each rayon local government before the New Year and eventually embodied in a centralised Plan for the whole Union, leads to the suspicion that the question is not left to the free and spontaneous decision of the kolhozniki, at any rate in regard to the disposal of their collective surplus. At the same time it is not every kind of crop, for example tobacco, flax or hemp, that in the raw state meets a demand among ordinary consumers, nor is it possible for kolhozy in the remote " back blocks " to send regular consignments of more or less perishable foodstuffs to a town market — the bulk of the stuff sold in these markets is drawn from a radius of not more than twenty miles. So

decentralised collections provide the only assured way of disposing of the free surplus produce of some sorts of crops and of some kolhozy. Also, although the prices paid for decentralised collections are low, certain concessions or privileges are granted to kolhozy and kolhozniki who agree to sell produce in this way. Prior to 1935, when the sale of most consumption goods was rationed and the supply of consumption goods of any sort to rural districts very meagre and precarious, a system known as *otovarivanie* was practised. This meant that the purchasing organisation provided consumption goods, not exactly in barter for the produce sold by the kolhozy, but for the kolhozy or kolhozniki to buy with the money received for their produce. After 1935 the same system was in principle continued, but the manufactured goods provided were known as the "stimulation" fund. Obviously if the prospect of obtaining something in exchange was to stimulate the grower to sell his produce, it must be something not easily procured in any other way. For instance, a kolhoznik might conclude that a bicycle would be a great help in getting to and from his work ; but, except possibly in Moscow and two or three of the largest towns, one cannot walk into a shop and buy a bicycle over the counter, and in the average market town the would-be purchaser would probably have to put his name down for months before he could hope to get delivery of his machine. However he might find that his *sel'po*, or village co-operative association, had been allotted a certain number of bicycles to sell to kolhozniki who contracted to supply a given quantity of grain, potatoes, milk, etc., at the fixed

or so-called conventional price. True, the bicycle would cost rather more in terms of grain, etc., than if it were bought in the normal way with the proceeds of sales on the open market. But the kolhoznik would be certain of getting his bicycle as soon as he had fulfilled his part of the contract. The same principle applied to the kolhoz desiring to acquire a motor truck or a wireless set for the club-room.

At one time even common necessities like cotton print, cloth and boots were included in stimulation funds ; but as the supply of these goods increases, their efficacy as stimulants decreases. From the ordinary kolhoznik's point of view this method of stimulation was not popular. The author once witnessed a heated argument outside a village co-operative between a lusty peasant woman and the manager of the rayon co-operative association, the former's grievance being that, because she had not delivered a certain quantity of grain to the sel'po, she was unable to buy some material that was available only in the stimulation fund. Further details were not elicitable, but obviously a kolhoznik family with several mouths to feed and relatively few working members would consume a far greater proportion of its grain dividend than another family with a much larger proportion of working members. At the same time a family with two or three children, not quite old enough to earn labour-days but able to look after livestock and work in the garden allotment, might easily, by selling their own eggs, vegetables, etc., on the market, make as much or even more money than a family whose members were working all their time on the kolhoz farm.

Latterly the principle of stimulating production, and the consequent sale to the State of surplus produce, by monetary rewards seems to have been ousting the principle of supplying deficit goods. In 1936 it was decreed that the price paid for deliveries of grain in excess of the compulsory quota was to rise in proportion to the amount of grain delivered. Thus a premium of 10 per cent over the standard price was to be paid to a kolhoz on all grain voluntarily sold when the quantity exceeded 1 ton; if the amount exceeded 5 tons the price for the whole consignment was to be 15 per cent over the standard rate, and so on until a kolhoz voluntarily selling over 100 tons above its statutory compulsory quota received double the standard price. Exactly the same principle was applied to kolhozniki commencing with a voluntary sale of more than 15 kilos and rising to 500 kilos, for which double the standard price was to be paid. In principle the payment of premiums for voluntary sales in excess of a standard quantity is the same as the payment of premiums to industrial workers for output in excess of the standard daily task.

The method of encouraging output, whether of agricultural produce or industrial labour, by means of premiums must result in exaggerating differences in income. In the case of agriculture the kolhoz that, owing to the high yield of its land or because it possesses more than the average area per member, produces a large marketable surplus over its own needs and the State's quota, receives considerably more per unit of grain sold than other and less favoured kolhozy. This, of course, means that the members of such a prosperous kolhoz will enjoy

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personal incomes differentiated from those of less fortunate kolhozniki by a good deal more than the ratio between their actual productions per head.

The Soviet Government, for reasons of its own, maintains a veil over the prices paid for agricultural produce. Open market prices, of course, can be discovered by the simple expedient of visiting a market, and occasionally Soviet newspapers men-

PRICES IN KOPEKS PER KILO

	1928 *	1937 †
Bread, wheat .	9.1	85
„ rye . .	18.6	100
Potatoes . .	6.9	40
Beef . . .	69.6	760
Butter . .	221.3	1650
Eggs . . .	51.9	750
Sunflower oil .	49.0	1450

\* *Statistical Handbook*, 1932.

† Moscow retail prices in April 1937.

tion the prices at which cucumbers, cabbages or some such commodity are being sold in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev or some other large town. But this phenomenon is always connected with the usual late summer and autumn fall in vegetable prices, and in no circumstances is any mention of prices allowed in late winter and spring when supplies are scarce and prices consequently tending to rise. Open market prices of farm produce at the present time seem to be somewhat higher in relation to prices of manufactured goods, cotton prints, hollow ware, soap, etc., than before the War. According to the State Planning Commission's retail price index figures in 1928, the relation between food and industrial goods prices was

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approximately the same as in 1913, though in both cases the actual prices were considerably higher. If the average retail prices of wheat and rye bread, potatoes, beef, butter, eggs and sunflower oil in 1928 be taken as 100, the index in 1937 would be 1134. See table on preceding page.

Prices of industrial goods are less easily compared than the prices of foodstuffs, but among the goods forming part of practically every peasant's household budget are sugar, soap, calico and kerosene. In 1928 and 1937 these cost in kopeks per kilo —

	1928	1937
Sugar . . .	62·8	380
Soap . . .	53·8	155
Calico (metre) .	31·9	375
Kerosene . . .	9·6	47
	158·1	957

If the 1928 price level be 100, then the index figure in 1937 would be 606. But if the open market prices enabled the kolhoznik in 1937 to buy more sugar, salt, soap, kerosene, etc., than in 1928 as the result of the sale of the same quantity of butter, eggs, potatoes, etc., it must be remembered that open market sales in 1937 accounted for only a small part of his surplus produce, the greater part of which he was compelled to sell to the State at very low prices.

In European Russia by far the most important crop and the mainstay of peasant economy has always been grain, mainly wheat and rye. The standard price <sup>(26)</sup> paid by the Government for the 1928 harvest was, for rye between R.5·20 and R.5·80 per quintal, and for wheat between R.8 and

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R.9. The ratio between the cost of the grain and the retail price of the same weight of bread was —

Rye	.	.	1 : 1.65
Wheat	.	.	1 : 2.19

The average price paid for grain in 1937 is difficult to ascertain, because it is impossible to say how much was paid in premiums. The average price for compulsory deliveries of wheat was probably about R.12 or R.13 per quintal, and for rye about R.10 or R.11. The average price paid for voluntary sales was 20 or 30 per cent above these rates, and for large quantities would be more than double. In an average year about 12 per cent of the Government's total procurements consists of purchased grain, and even if the average price paid for purchased grain were 50 per cent more than for compulsory deliveries, the average cost to the Government in 1937 would have been no more than R.14 per quintal of wheat and R.11.50 per quintal of rye. At these rates the ratio between the cost to the Government of grain and the retail price of the same weight of bread would be about —

Rye	.	.	1 : 7
Wheat	.	.	1 : 8

These figures, even allowing for a large margin of error, strongly suggest that the money yield of a unit of grain delivered to the State in 1937 was much less in comparative purchasing power than in 1928. It does not, of course, follow that the average per head consumption of industrial goods by the agricultural population was less in 1937 than in 1928, but judging from the imperfect data available it seems a fair assumption that in 1937 the agricul-

tural population had to give a larger quantity of produce for a given quantity of industrial goods than in 1928. It may be that, owing to an improvement in the unit yield of the soil and to an increase in the area of land cultivated per head of farm population, the net surplus of farm produce per head has more than made up for the lower purchasing power of a unit of farm produce.

## CHAPTER XX

### DOMESTIC ECONOMY IN COLLECTIVE FARMS

IN 1935 Stalin broadcast a slogan, "The prosperity of the kolhoznik". The foundation of the new rural prosperity was to be the new collective farm statutes, which conferred on all kolhozy the permanent usufruct of the land allotted to them and contained provisions protecting the kolhoznik from victimisation and exploitation. Ideas of what constitutes prosperity differ and in Soviet Russia as in Tsarist Russia the conception of peasant prosperity is very modest. But whatever may be thought of the absolute standard of living of the Soviet rural population at the present time, it has improved during the past four or five years. It is true that the money income of the average kolhoznik represents a ridiculously small purchasing power over manufactured consumption goods compared with the average wages earned by industrial workers, but this is partly compensated by the foodstuffs obtained without payment and by the urban inhabitant's expenditure on such things as transport, house rents and heating, that the peasant avoids. The average number of workers in a kolhoz at the beginning of 1935 was 124.3,<sup>(27)</sup> which may be taken as approximately correct for the following two or three years. This figure presumably included all capable of earning labour-days, such as women who work on the farm only at busy times

and occupy themselves for the rest of the time in their own homes and in tending their own tiny farms. The average gross money income and the amount distributed on account of labour-day dividends per kolhoz in 1933 and 1937 were — <sup>(28)</sup>

	1933	1937
Average total money income per kolhoz . . . . .	R. 25,300	R. 66,500
Average sum per kolhoz distributed among the kolhozniki	6,100	31,800

The average dividend per worker was, therefore, R.49 in 1933 and R.256 in 1937. The number of labour-days earned by the average kolhoznik in 1937 was 220,<sup>(29)</sup> so that the money value of one labour-day works out at R.1.16.\* Since each kolhoznik family contained about 1.74 active workers,† in most cases a man and wife, the money income on account of labour-days came to less than R.500 per family. But the labour-day dividend accounts for a comparatively small part only of the kolhoznik's total money income. The average income per dvor in 1937 in 28 provinces, that is in the greater part of European Russia, was R.1806.60,<sup>(30)</sup> of which about 20 per cent was derived from outside earnings as tractor-drivers, etc., on other kolhozy or State farms, as handicraft workers, as temporary hands in State industrial enterprises, etc. The rest was derived from the

\* See Appendix No. I.

† According to *Socialist Construction*, in 1935 245,400 kolhozy contained 17,334,000 dvory, and if the average number of workers per kolhoz was 124.3, there were in all 30.2 million workers, or 1.74 per dvor.

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sale of surplus dividends in kind and surplus produce from their own small farms.

When considering the average money income and dividend in kind, it must not be forgotten that each is liable to be complementary to the other. In districts where the main crop is some industrial raw material, sugar beet, cotton, etc., the money dividend will normally be high and the grain dividend small or entirely lacking. The kolhozniki will then have to buy a very large part of their food requirements. On the other hand, when grain is the main crop the kolhozniki's money dividend will be lower, but they will get a large part of their food requirements from the kolhoz and therefore have less to buy with their money income.

From the same source which afforded the information that the average money income per dvor was R.1806.60, we find that outgoings were, R.1768.10 per dvor. Possibly the difference of R.38.60 is attributable to savings. The distribution of expenditure in percentages of the whole in the years 1934 to 1937 was as follows : <sup>(31)</sup>

	1934	1935	1936	1937
PURCHASES . . .	81.6	80.0	78.2	79.7
Of which —				
Industrial goods . .	33.4	36.2	38.5	38.4
Foodstuffs . . .	28.9	25.6	24.5	27.5
Livestock . . .	17.0	13.4	11.1	10.1
TAXATION, LOAN SUB- SCRIPTIONS and other obligatory and "volun- tary" payments . .	10.7	9.7	8.7	5.8
SUNDRIES . . .	7.7	10.3	13.1	14.5
Cultural and Social . .	..	..	..	4.1
Services . . .	..	..	..	1.8

The Russian kolhoznik apparently has to buy a very considerable part of his food requirements,

certainly a higher proportion than the pre-War peasant. But it must be remembered that the production of technical crops has been much expanded by the Bolsheviks and a larger proportion of the Soviet rural population has to buy staple food-stuffs. Another thing that tends to increase the proportion of peasant income spent on food is the increasing numbers of mechanics, agronomes and other specialists working on the land, many of whom are paid entirely in money, while a good many of those who do receive part of their remuneration in kind prefer to sell it straight away to collecting organisations or the consumers' co-operative and buy food in a ready-made form, or at least much further advanced towards a condition of consumability.

Taxation and other forms of obligatory and "voluntary" levies took a smaller part of the kolhoznik's income in 1937 than in previous years. But this was due not to a reduction in the absolute amount of taxation, etc., collected, but to the increased money income of the kolhozniki which was probably not far short of double the average income per dvor in 1935. But if less than 6 per cent of money income seems at first sight a very reasonable rate of tax, it must be remembered that both the kolhoz and the kolhoznik, who possesses his own small-holding, have to surrender a material part of their production to the State at prices that are admitted, even by the Bolsheviks, to be below the fair market rate and to constitute a form of taxation. (See Chapter XVIII.)

The average expenditure in 1937 per dvor in 28 provinces on manufactured goods was R.678·70,<sup>(32)</sup>

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of which R.659·20 was spent on goods of personal consumption, the balance of about R.20 being presumably spent on such things as window glass, gardening tools and other things required by the domestic economy. The money spent on personal goods was distributed as follows :

	R.
Clothing and footwear . . . . .	364·50
Consumable goods (tea, sugar, etc.) .	131·50
Non-consumable goods (domestic utensils, house linen, etc.) . . . . .	120·10
Cultural goods, etc. (books, toys, etc.)	43·10
	659·20

This was 33·5 per cent more than in 1936 and 76 per cent more than in 1935, in which year, however, average retail prices were lower than in 1937.

The average kolhoznik family consists of about 4·8 persons, therefore expenditure per head would be —

	R.
Clothing and footwear . . . . .	75·90
Consumable goods . . . . .	27·40
Nonconsumable goods . . . . .	25·00
Cultural goods . . . . .	9·00
Total . . . . .	137·30

In a small book published in 1935 in Leningrad under the title *Consumption and Demand*, some details are given of actual kolhoznik purchases of clothing in 1933 :

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No. 1. Seven persons in family —		R.
1 man's suit . . .		115
2 overcoats . . .		316
1 pair trousers . . .		30
2 men's shirts . . .		32
1 pair men's shoes . . .		35
2 pairs women's shoes . . .		145
5 pairs galoshes . . .		75
50 metres calico . . .		100
Total . . .		848
Per head . . .		121·10
No. 2. Five persons in family—		R.
1 man's suit . . .		100
1 pair trousers . . .		30
2 shirts . . .		24
1 pair men's shoes . . .		30
"    " . . .		35
Cotton material . . .		50
Total . . .		269
Per head . . .		54·00
No. 3. Six persons in family —		R.
1 man's winter overcoat . . .		120
1 man's suit . . .		90
1 pair men's shoes . . .		35
2 suits men's underclothing . . .		40
2 women's chemises . . .		20
1 kerchief . . .		18
Total . . .		323
Per head . . .		54·00

In 1937 prices were higher and if it had been possible to buy the same lists at the same prices the articles themselves would have been of the very shoddiest description. These budgets in 1933 were much above the then average, and would corre-

spond more nearly to the average real income in 1937. It is obvious that the standard of clothing among the kolhozniki even in 1937 was not very high.

Some information was contained in *Planned Economy*, No. 9, 1938, on the total produce of kolhozy and the disposal thereof. In 1937 grain yields in some of the most important grain-growing regions in South-east Russia and in the Volga territory ranged from 82.5 to 117.3 quintals per dvor. These figures were much above the average, which on the basis of 18 million dvory and a gross harvest of 6800 million puds, or 1115 million quintals, works out at approximately 62 quintals. We are told that the 1937 harvest was 79 per cent larger than in 1936, in which case the quantity per dvor in the latter year must have been some 35 quintals. Of this 6.3 quintals went to the State as compulsory deliveries and another 3.8 quintals was needed to pay the M.T.S., thus leaving about 25 quintals. Voluntary or decentralised sales by kolhozy amounted to 1.9 quintals per dvor and sales by the kolhozniki of their surplus grain dividends amounted to 64.5 kilos, of which about 15 kilos were sold to the State or co-operative organisations and 49 kilos were sold on the open market. Clearly the average kolhoz family did not have much surplus grain to dispose of.

The number of labour-days earned per dvor in 1937 was given as 438,\* and of 220,979 kolhozy, that is about 90 per cent of the total number, 33.9 per cent, or about one-third, distributed more than 4 kilos per labour-day. Clearly the average

\* See Appendix No. I.

must have been less than 4 kilos. We are told in another place that the average grain dividend per dvor was 105 puds, or about 1720 kilos, which works out at only just under 4 kilos per labour-day. The harvest in 1936 was very much less than in 1937, and since it was stated that the dividend distributed in 1937 was 279.4 per cent of 1936 it would appear that in 1936 on an average each dvor received only 616 kilos, out of which about 64.5 kilos were sold. From the foregoing we may calculate that the disposal of the grain harvest in 1936 was more or less on the following lines :

	Quintals
Total harvest per dvor . . . .	35
Compulsory deliveries per dvor . . . .	6.3
Payment to M.T.S. per dvor . . . .	3.8
Sales by kolhoz per dvor . . . .	1.9
	12
Retained in the kolhoz, per dvor . . . .	23
Distributed to the kolhozniki . . . .	6
	17

This leaves 17 quintals per dvor for the needs of the kolhoz, including fodder for livestock, seed for the following year and a reserve fund amounting to 10 to 15 per cent of the annual consumption.

Since the normal consumption of grain per head of peasant population, including grain fed to domestic animals and poultry, is at least 250 kilos and the average family consists of 4.8 persons, it may be concluded that in 1936 a great many kolhozniki, even in the grain regions, had to buy additional supplies.

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In 1937 the distribution of grain would have been somewhat as follows :

	Quintals
Total harvest per dvor . . . .	62
Compulsory deliveries per dvor * . . . .	6.3
Payment to M.T.S. per dvor † . . . .	5.4
Sales by kolhoz per dvor ‡ . . . . (say)	13.3
	25
Retained in the kolhoz, per dvor . . . .	37
Distributed to the kolhozniki . . . .	17
For collective needs § . . . .	20

[\* The amount of compulsory deliveries being based on the area sown, which did not appreciably change, and not on the yield, would be about the same as in 1936.

† This is an official figure. It is substantially higher than 1936 because payment to the M.T.S. depends on the actual yield.

‡ A supposititious figure to account for the balance of the crop.

§ The collective needs for seed and fodder would not alter very much from year to year, but owing to the increasing head of livestock fodder requirements would, if anything, expand.]

The following shows the percentage distribution of animal products in 1937 :

	In Per Cent of Total Production					
	Milk	Butter	Oils and Fats	Wool	Honey	Eggs
Compulsory deliveries to the State . . . .	43.6	33.2	1.3	59.0	...	7.9
Sales . . . .	14.4	35.2	43.0	25.8	34.4	53.0
Of which, on the open market . . . .	5.9	28.9	39.9	6.5	22.9	31.4
Internal consumption on productive needs . . . .	19.8	3.9	4.7	4.9	26.8	14.9
Distributed to kolhozniki . . . .	7.8	27.5	50.8	9.3	38.3	24.2
of which, communal feeding . . . .	4.9	17.1	39.7	...	8.9	19.9
grants to invalids and non-workers . . . .	1.6	2.3	3.7	0.4	2.9	3.5
Raw material for working up . . . .	14.4	0.2	0.2	1.0	0.5	...

In connection with the above it should be noted that a large part of the produce sold, apart from

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sales on the open market, is purchased by the kolhozniki at prices much lower than those realised in the open market. For example, in 1935 market prices and those charged to the kolhozniki were —

	(Roubles per Kilo)	
	Market Price	Price to Kolhozniki
Milk . . .	0·44	0·21
Butter . . .	8·92	4·22
Eggs . . .	4·72	2·66

Internal productive needs include milk fed to calves and young stock, and possibly rations given to hired labourers and experts not being members of the kolhoz. It is perhaps rather puzzling to know what the kolhozniki do with the wool they receive, and possibly buy, but in some regions spinning and weaving wool and felting are traditional cottage handicrafts. The proportion of the kolhoz production of milk, butter, etc., consumed by the kolhozniki may seem rather small, but most kolhozniki nowadays possess their own cow, poultry, pigs and garden plot.

A majority of kolhozy possess subsidiary enterprises which may be divided into two classes: (a) For working up raw foodstuffs such as dairies, bacon-curing and sausage-making plant, flour mills and seed-crushing plants, and blacksmith and carpenters' shops for executing repairs to machinery, etc. All these might be found on any large farming estate in any part of the world. (b) Industrial enterprises, such as brick-fields, rope walks, potteries, felting, lace-making, embroidery, linen-weaving and basket-making. Two conditions

chiefly determine whether a kolhoz shall embark upon an industrial enterprise: one is, naturally, the presence locally of raw material (*e.g.* clay, hemp, flax, willows); and the other, equally understandably, the presence in the kolhoz of surplus labour. A third condition might be added, the previous existence of the handicraft among the peasant population; for all these are traditional peasant handicrafts and were practised in their own particular localities long before the Revolution.

It is symptomatic of Bolshevik methods that after collectivisation peasant handicrafts suffered an eclipse, partly because the kolhozniki were prevented from carrying on their old work, very largely because they could not obtain raw material, and partly because the laws against private trading rendered it very difficult to dispose of the finished product at a reasonable price. Latterly, however, the authorities, both central and local, have shown a more liberal attitude towards peasant industry, if the enterprise is carried on co-operatively and not independently. Supplies of raw material and even of machinery have been made available and prices realised are high enough to show a reasonable return. In some cases kolhozy seem to have abused the right to engage in industrial enterprise and begun to neglect their proper function of farming in order to devote their resources to doing things that have not the faintest connection with agriculture. For instance, according to *Pravda* of 23rd October 1938, some kolhozy in the Rostov province started coal mining, employing hired labour as well as their own people. Obviously kolhozy would not mine coal on a commercial scale

unless the demand for it made mining more remunerative than farming. But, though working an outcrop of coal for the immediate needs of the kolhoz itself might be permissible, the authorities could not tolerate coal mining on a commercial scale by unauthorised bodies. The Government therefore decreed that all kolhoz industrial enterprises unconnected with agriculture must be liquidated and handed over to the rayon executive committee to be carried on as a local public enterprise or as a co-operative enterprise.

What enterprises are permissible has not been precisely laid down, but lace-making, embroidery, wood-carving, etc., are traditional peasant crafts and may therefore be officially regarded as proper activities for kolhozniki. In pre-War Russia beautiful lace and embroidered linen were made by the peasant women during the idle winter months. The same sort of things are made to-day, but the State interference has resulted in the commercialisation and degradation of the art. A lot of the embroidery offered for sale in the shops has all the appearance of being machine-sewn and of mass output. At the same time it is by no means cheap.

The most acceptable handicrafts are those that can be carried on in winter only, when work on the land is at a minimum. Such are, obviously, wood carving, embroidery and so on. One kolhoz in Moscow Province which has branched out into felt-making, rope-making and glove-making (the last-named a peculiarly Moscow handicraft) earned in 1936 R.633,500, or R.5,760 per dvor, and paid out R.5 per labour-day. It also invested

R.70,000 in building and the purchase of some pedigree cattle. Earnings on such a scale are, however, rare. There are about 150,000 kolhozy, out of a total of about 245,000, possessing one or more subsidiary enterprises of a primary type, dairy, bacon-curing, blacksmith's shop or primitive mill or crushing plant, from which their average annual gross revenue amounts to about R.500 only. It is only fair to suggest that the value of such enterprises to the kolhozniki is rather greater than represented by the mere money revenue, because the kolhoznik gets his cream converted into butter, his grain into flour and his pork into bacon at a very moderate cost.

Another source of money income to the kolhozniki is wages outside the kolhoz. This falls into two categories: (a) taking independent employment in forestry, mining, etc., and to a less extent in factories; (b) performing work in fulfilment of contracts entered into by the kolhoz, such as transport of goods for State collecting organisations or co-operative associations, work on railways such as clearing snow from the track, ploughing and other field work for sovhozy or other kolhozy. In the first case, the kolhoznik receives a money wage at the ruling trade-union rate for the job, while in the second case he earns labour-days in the same way as if he were working on the farm.

In theory kolhozniki are perfectly free to refuse to take employment in industrial enterprises. But, in accordance with the usual practice, the numbers of kolhozniki to be employed in industry is planned. A decree of 21st July 1938 provides that in some 32 territories the president of the rayon planning

commission, and in the remaining territories the president of the provincial planning commission, shall plan the recruitment or conscription of surplus kolhoz labour. (The actual work employed is *nabor*, which is the term for military conscription and has a definitely compulsory significance.) Republican and provincial commissions were also to be formed to organise and regulate the recruitment of labour, and from the beginning of 1939 territories were to be allotted to separate Commissariats, which presumably means that the enterprises belonging to each Commissariat have the exclusive right of enlisting labour in their particular territories. Every kolhoznik gets a contract from his employing enterprise, and when the work is of a permanent constructional nature, the minimum term of engagement is twelve months. The conditions of recruitment lay down that, when groups of ten or more kolhozniki are despatched together, they shall be in the charge of a politically trustworthy and reliable leader; on arrival at their destination they must be met by a representative of the employing enterprise and provided with housing and feeding facilities; and that a subsistence allowance of R.6 is payable for each day of travelling. All this indicates that enlisted kolhozniki may be employed at considerable distances from their own homes and that they are under some sort of supervision from the time they are entrained. They certainly have little or no choice as to the sort of work they will do, nor the enterprise in which they will work; and whether they have the option of accepting or refusing employment is a question that must remain open.

Kolhozniki who take employment in industry are excused the usual compulsory deliveries of milk from their own private cows and are allowed to buy grain and fodder from the kolhoz up to the amount of the average labour-day dividend at the prices paid by the State for compulsory deliveries. These concessions certainly make things easier for the family remaining behind in the kolhoz. In the old days peasants engaged in *othozhy promysel* (labour at a distance from home) because they were unable to make a full livelihood out of farming their own land ; in other words, because they were surplus to the labour needs, firstly, of their family holding, and secondly, of their village or commune. Out of their wages they had to assist in supporting the family remaining at home, and before the cancellation of the redemption payments (see Chapter V) they had to remit their share to the communal treasurer, while before the emancipation they had to pay obrok to their masters. The kolhoznik who engages in *othozhy promysel* presumably does so because he cannot make a tolerable living on his kolhoz : like his pre-War prototype, he must remit part of his wages to his family and to pay his agricultural tax and other dues ; but unlike his prototype, who was recalled to his village if he got into arrears with his payments, the kolhoznik cannot be recalled by his kolhoz before his contract expires. There seem to be no figures available of the total number of kolhozniki working for wages outside their kolhoz,\* but figures of total rural income in 1935 <sup>(33)</sup> show that wages accounted for R.15,167 million out of a grand total of R.43,646 million and

\* See Appendix No. I.

were the largest single item by a big margin, the next being income from open market sales totalling R.10,783 million. The sum of R.15,167 million may have included wages earned by rural inhabitants other than kolhozniki, such as the wages of co-operative employees, salaries of government and local government officials, etc., whether this was so or not the greater part, if not the whole, of the sum must have been kolhozniki's earnings. In the same year the total money income derived by kolhozy from subsidiary enterprises and from services performed amounted to R.1740 million only, and an appreciable proportion of this consisted of payments by kolhozniki for the products of subsidiary enterprises, for the hire of teams and machinery to cultivate their own plots, etc.

## CHAPTER XXI

### WHAT COLLECTIVISATION HAS DONE FOR THE PEASANT

It is a difficult and invidious task to compare conditions in Soviet Russia with conditions before the War; but the ultimate aim, and in fact the only justification, of Bolshevism is to raise the standard of living and the well-being of the toiling masses above anything that could be achieved in a capitalist system. The difficulty in comparing the standard of living of the kolhoznik with the pre-War peasant in terms of consumption of material things only is to arrive at comparable averages. In pre-War Russia about 16 per cent of the peasant farmers were well-to-do according to local standards, while 12 per cent were landless and earned their living almost entirely by hiring themselves out as agricultural or industrial unskilled labourers. The standard of living of these landless peasants was incredibly low. A peasant holding of less than 5 dessiatini (13·5 acres) in total area was in ordinary circumstances considered too small to support a family without some extraneous sources of income. In 1917 nearly 70 per cent of all peasant households had less than 4 dessiatini (10·8 acres) of arable land, 28·9 per cent possessed no horse and 47·6 per cent had only one horse, and the total head of cattle came to 44 per every hundred of rural population. In the densely

populated central agricultural provinces there were only 28.5 head of cattle per 100 population and many peasant households had no livestock at all except poultry, because they were too poor properly to feed themselves, let alone animals.

The Bolsheviks intended that collectivisation should iron out the differences in peasant well-being. The former well-to-do peasant and the former batrak started level ; if anything the scales were weighted in favour of the latter, qualified by his poverty to take a more important part in the management of the kolhoz than the former, who was a member on sufferance and was probably lucky not to have suffered the fate of a kulak. It was beyond the power of the Bolsheviks to overcome differences in density of population and in fertility of soil, and therefore the average prosperity of kolhoz in districts such as the North Caucasus and South-east Russia where the area of crops per head is large, is higher than in the central agricultural regions where the area per head is much smaller. But the actual differences in the well-being of kolhozniki are much greater than can be accounted for by local and natural conditions, and are the result much more of differences in the efficiency and honesty of kolhoz managements and local party and government officials than of differences in productive resources and capacities. It is stated <sup>(34)</sup> that in 1937 tens of thousands of kolhoz dvory received over 1000 puds (over 16 tons) of grain, and millions of dvory more than 500 puds. It may be assumed that such quantities were earned by dvory having more than the average number of workers or by tractor-drivers

and others having opportunities of accumulating many more labour-days than the rank-and-file kolhoznik. A dvor containing six or seven persons would not require more than 15 puds a head, or in all 100 puds, for domestic consumption. The remainder would be sold, realising possibly over R.1000. In any case family incomes of R.4000 and over, including dividends in kind valued at current prices, are by no means uncommon. Whether assertions that some kolhozniki enjoy total incomes amounting to R.30,000 or R.40,000 could be substantiated is perhaps doubtful, but the important thing is that many kolhoznik families are, according to Russian standards, quite well off. They have enough to eat and can buy small luxuries like tea, sugar, tobacco and an occasional bottle of vodka, are decently clothed and may possess a timepiece and a bicycle. The demand for watches, musical instruments and bicycles is steadily growing and the production of these things causes the value of the country's retail trade turnover to show a greater apparent increase than would be accounted for by the increase in the production of ordinary necessities such as textiles and soap. It seems that while the lowest income groups even now cannot afford to buy enough food and clothing to satisfy the most exiguous demand, the higher income groups, after satisfying their basic needs, can buy luxury or semi-luxury goods. Of course, were this not so, the efficacy of higher remuneration in stimulating the worker to greater effort would be impaired.

While periodicals such as *Planned Economy*, which sometimes contain articles on the standard

of living of the kolhozniki, rather naturally quote as examples those kolhozy where conditions are good, one must look in the daily press for the other side of the picture, for Soviet newspapers sometimes publish letters from country correspondents voicing complaints against kolhoz managements and local party secretaries. It is worth noting that the Soviet Government rather encourages the airing of grievances so long as these do not criticise policy, but only persons.

An article by a correspondent of *Pravda* in the Riazan Province which appeared in the issue of 1st September 1938 stated :

Last year in Riazan Province 77 kolhozy out of 187 paid no money dividends at all on account of labour-days and 83 kolhozy paid out less than R.0.50 per labour-day. There are some kolhozy in which the presidents, after the new accounts have been adopted, simply ignore them and continue to pay out money as it suits them. In the kolhoz "named after Budenny" expenditure exceeded the estimates by R.6000. The president of the kolhoz "named after Voroshilov" received money for the sale of produce, but instead of paying it into the kolhoz's account, spent it according to his own ideas.

In many kolhozy the grain dividend is not more than 2 kilos per labour-day. In 1936, when drought affected some regions, some kolhozy distributed less than 1.5 kilos. Such a quantity would be insufficient properly to feed an average family. Many kolhozy distribute money and grain and practically nothing else. A labour-day dividend of one rouble in money and 4 kilos of grain is not exceptionally low. The money value of the grain would be about 60 kopeks, so that the whole dividend would be worth about R.1.60. The pur-

chasing power of the Soviet rouble to-day is equal to about 10 kopeks before the War ; a kolhoznik earning two hundred labour-days in the year would receive at the above rates 320 Soviet roubles, or the equivalent of about 32 pre-War roubles. The pre-War money wages of permanent farm labourers were from R.70 to R.100 a year, in addition to which they usually received a certain quantity of foodstuff. The kolhoznik satisfies a large proportion of his needs from his own allotment and animals, and is perhaps less dependent on his labour-day earnings than the pre-War farm labourer on his wages ; but kolhozniki belonging to the most backward and poorest kolhozy certainly do not live any better than the pre-War farm labourers and poor peasants. In such kolhozy the kolhozniki are practically compelled to take outside employment during the slack seasons in order to make both ends meet.

Instead of poverty being eliminated from the countryside and a better and more equal distribution of agricultural income brought about, collectivisation shows relative wealth alongside great poverty no less than the old system of independent peasant enterprise. The former rich peasant is to-day represented by the kolhozniki who, as we have seen, have incomes running into thousands of roubles, while the kolhozniki belonging to the poor and backward kolhozy are comparable with the former Batraki.

If collectivisation has failed to iron out differences in income and standard of living among the Russian agricultural population, has it succeeded in raising the average standard ? This is very diffi-

cult to decide because conditions in the villages to-day are so radically different from pre-War conditions. It may be accepted without question that, so far as social services are concerned, the Soviet peasant is better provided for than the Tsarist peasant. The improvement may not be so great as is made out by interested parties, who usually take for comparison Tzarist Russia of the 1890's or early 1900's instead of just before the War. In the last decade before the War education made very great progress: in 1926 it was found that 81 per cent of the male population and 53 per cent of the female between the ages of 20 and 24 were literate.<sup>(35)</sup> Clearly elementary education at least was within the reach of the greater part of the population in the years immediately before the War. To-day very nearly 100 per cent of the population is literate. Health services in the country have been immensely increased. To-day there are over 100,000 qualified doctors in the U.S.S.R.<sup>(36)</sup> compared with about 20,000 in 1914,<sup>(37)</sup> and the services of a qualified practitioner are available in every township and village of any size. The Bolsheviks have made rural life infinitely fuller than in the old days with clubs, libraries, cinemas and the like. The chief drawback from the kolhoznik's point of view is that so much time is devoted to political lectures and discussions. It should be understood that all these things, education, health services, recreation, etc., are organised and run by the local party and administrative committees, who are sometimes themselves too uncultured and rude to practise the culture and refinement they are supposed to teach. In *Pravda* of

13th November 1938 a letter from a correspondent in the Moscow Province (not in the inaccessible back-blocks), entitled "Hooligan Behaviour toward Rural Intelligentsia", described how the head of a rayon educational department "conducts himself towards the teachers like the ineffable Sergeant Prishibeev [a character in fiction]. He bawls at them, bangs his fists and terrorises them." The whole rural population, intellectuals and others as well as the peasants, are at the mercy of the local party bosses, to whom we will return in a moment.

Whether the Soviet kolhoznik of to-day is materially better off than the pre-War peasant; that is, is better fed, clothed and housed, is impossible to say. Admirers and opponents of Bolshevism give diametrically opposite views, without however producing any plausible grounds for their statements. It is very unconvincing to learn that kolhozniki buy so many more watches, bicycles, etc., than before the War. Such things are relatively infinitely cheaper to-day, besides even the old-régime peasant who might have afforded them, had no particular urge to possess them. If we compare the average purchasing power of the kolhoz peasant with the pre-War peasant there seems to be very little difference in favour of one or the other.

Lenin himself was responsible for the figures on the next page in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. Another authority<sup>(38)</sup> gives the gross money yield of average-sized peasant holdings as ranging from R.118 in the Ukraine to R.204 in New Russia; and a Soviet publication in 1924<sup>(39)</sup> puts the aver-

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age income from agriculture per head of peasant population before the War at R.52. If only 37 per cent of the gross income of the pre-War peasant was available for personal consumption, and if the average family consisted of six members it may be

MONEY EXPENDITURE PER PEASANT HOUSEHOLD IN THE 1890's  
(In roubles)

Group	Personal Consumption	Farm Expenditure	Dues & Taxes	Total
A (without working animals) . . .	39.16	7.66	15.47	62.29
B (with one head of cattle) . . .	38.89	24.32	17.77	90.98
C (with two head of cattle) . . .	76.79	56.35	32.02	165.16
D (with three head of cattle) . . .	110.60	102.07	49.55	262.22
E (with four head of cattle) . . .	190.84	181.12	67.90	439.86
F (with five and more head of cattle) . . .	187.83	687.03	84.34	959.20
Average . . .	81.27 37.3%	102.23 46.9%	34.20 15.8%	219.70 100%

reckoned that the average sum per head available for purchasing goods for personal consumption was about R.13. In the last chapter (page 221) we saw that in 1937 the expenditure on personal consumption goods per kolhoz family was R.659, or counting 4.8 members to a family, about R.137 per head. But taking quality as well as quantity into account, the pre-War rouble had at least ten times the purchasing power of the Soviet rouble in 1937. It must also be remembered that while the figure for 1937 is the total income available for purchasing consumption goods, the pre-War figures of peasant

income quoted refer to income from farming only and exclude outside earnings.

The statutes of 1935 conveyed to the kolhozy the inalienable use of their land for all time and forbade any reduction of the land held by a kolhoz. It has been said that this law gave great satisfaction to the kolhozniki, who, even if the property in the land remained theoretically with the State, felt that they were secured in its use. In fact the statutes restored to them collectively much the same sort and degree of right to the land as their fathers had enjoyed in respect to their use of the communal land in the mir ; but not the individual use of the land by separate households. In theory the kolhoznik should enjoy greater economic security than the former independent peasant, but in practice his position as a member of a collective enterprise is not so secure as it seems. According to the statutes, a kolhoznik may be expelled only by a free majority vote of a general meeting of his fellow kolhozniki at which at least two-thirds of the total membership are present. But there have been many instances in which this formality has been omitted. The following instances were taken from *Pravda* in the course of 1938 :

In Sverdlovsk Province [Urals] in 1937 more than 5000 families were expelled from kolhozy.

In Usinski Rayon, in kolhoz *Peredovaya*, kolhoznik Koustov was expelled simply because his father was not a kolhoznik and worked in a co-operative.

The *Liagoushinski* kolhoz in the Koungourski Rayon expelled kolhoznik Kobelev because he made bad rake and wheels. [The unfortunate Kobelev was evidently employed as a wheelwright.]

In the *Sylvenski* kolhoz, Koungourski Rayon, kol-

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hoznik Chaikin was expelled because he worked at lumbering under a contract, which, it should be noted, was made by the kolhoz itself.

The extent to which kolhozniki have been illegally expelled in the Ordzhonikidze Province (North Caucasus) may be judged by the fact that more than 6000 were expelled in 1937 and the beginning of 1938.

The honest kolhoznik Bastrykov was expelled from the kolhoz *Stalinets*, Naourski Rayon, on the ground of religious convictions and his long beard! [In Russia there has from the earliest days of Christianity been a mystical connection between Beards and religion. Peter I tried to abolish beards from Russian faces because he regarded facial hair as the outward indication of a conservative spirit likely to disapprove of his reforms.]

Last year and during the early part of this year in the Zelenchoukski Rayon of the Karachaev Autonomous Area 157 kolhozniki were expelled. The expulsions one and all were decided at illegal meetings.

Sometimes the local party or administrative officials interfere with the internal affairs of kolhozy :

The deputy president of the Poltava town council and the chief of the rayon agricultural department ordered that a general meeting of the members of the kolhoz *Stalina* dismiss their president, comrade Litovchenko, and elect comrade Babanski. Eventually, under strong pressure, 135 members out of 249 present voted to dismiss their president, while the total membership of the kolhoz was 582.

To judge by complaints in the newspapers the administrations or managing committees not infrequently conduct the affairs of their kolhozy in complete disregard of the interests of the kolhozniki. According to the statutes the administrative costs of a kolhoz shall not exceed 2 per cent of its gross money revenue, yet :

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There is not a single kolhoz in the Rayon [Bakourski Rayon, Saratov Province] in which the administrative costs do not exceed 2 per cent of the money revenue. In half of the kolhozy this expenditure is between 4 and 8 per cent. In 14 kolhozy it comes to more than 8 per cent, while in the kolhoz *Redcliff* the administrative costs swallowed up 14 per cent of the money income, while 5 to 6 per cent was squandered on the hire of outside labour.

A correspondent in the Kursk Province writes as follows in November :

In many kolhozy in the Medvenski Rayon the managements have taken the wrong road, ignoring the personal interests of the kolhozniki and infringing their rights. . . . Kolhozniki require horses and carts to take their goods to market or themselves to hospital. But it is very difficult to get transport. In the kolhozy *Bolshevik*, *Molotov* and *Kirov* the kolhozniki must importunate [lit. trans., go on begging for a long time] the president or a brigadier before they get a horse and cart, even if their need is urgent. . . . To-day, when practically every kolhoznik possesses a cow, a pig and poultry, the distribution of a fodder dividend on account of labour-days is of immediate importance. . . . But the management of the kolhoz *The 16th Party Congress* [kolhozy certainly adopt some odd names] has different notions and is holding up the distribution of straw and other fodder. . . . In other kolhozy in the rayon advances of fodder are similarly being delayed.

The kolhozniki register complaints with the rayon agricultural department. . . . Some fifty complaints have accumulated in the department. They will lie there for six months covered with dust.

A correspondent in the North Caucasus writes :

The kolhozniki have lifted a big potato crop and many have 10 tons or more, but they have nowhere to store them. With the setting in of frosty weather the potatoes will be ruined and, obviously, the best thing is to sell them in the town markets. But in order to get them to market

the kolhoznik must pay R.200 to the kolhoz management for transport. However, even at this fantastic price, only selected kolhozniki are granted transport. The others have to hire carts from independent peasants, who demand from R.350 to R.400 for one trip to the town. . . . They [the independent peasants] earn outrageous sums in this way and their incomes exceed by several times the incomes of the kolhozniki.

And in this connection it is worth noting that in April 1938 the Government decreed that independent peasants should in future pay a tax ranging from R.275 to R.500, according to locality, on their first horse, and from R.450 to R.800 on every subsequent horse, because they were making altogether too much money out of "speculating" in transport. And incidentally giving rise to envy and dissatisfaction among the kolhozniki.

On the other hand kolhozniki may be so occupied with their own affairs that they disregard their work on the kolhoz farm. The following is from a correspondent in Krasnoyarsk Province, Central Siberia :

Comrade Fedin, president of a kolhoz, has only one answer [to the question why he is behindhand with getting the grain reaped and threshed] — lack of labour. This, he says, explains why kolhozniki from other villages and independent peasants are working on his farm for wages. But comrade Fedin omits to mention that, at the same time, over a hundred able-bodied members of his own kolhoz took no part in the farm work. Among the members of the kolhoz is a certain Grigori Yakovenko. He once managed to worm his way into the party, and was formerly member of a sectarian organisation. He now owns three cows in milk, 30 sheep, several calves, two oxen, a cart, a plough and an allotment of two hectares (five acres). This year neither he nor any member of his

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family have earned a single labour-day, being occupied with their own private enterprise and in speculation, and taking advantage of the concessions made to kolhozniki. Another kolhoznik, Akim Zinenko . . . owns two cows much small livestock and two hectares of land. Neither he nor the two other able-bodied members of his household work on the kolhoz farm. . . . In the kolhoz *Kommunar* many kolhozniki under the guise of domestic servants employ what are for all purposes batraki. Kolhoznik Burmaga keeps as [female] domestic servant a certain Galagan, who in return for a pud of flour a month tends the animals and works on the land of this "kolhoznik". These "domestic servants" have tried to become members of the kolhoz, but the management refused to admit them on the ground that they lived well enough with their kolhoznik employers.

The point may well be taken that all these instances are the bad exceptions. Possibly they may be, but the reports quoted come from such diverse places as the Urals, Siberia, the Volga, Central Russia and North Caucasus. It is impossible to argue that bad kolhozy are isolated phenomena. As the reports tend to show, the bad kolhozy as a rule seem to be concentrated in bad rayons, which supports the conclusion that the rayon administrative heads and local party functionaries are mainly to blame. An analysis of the complaints also seems to show that exploitation of kolhozniki is nearly always due to one of two types of local office-holders, those who, from political convictions or from personal ambition, try to extract as much as possible for the State, or those who from mere greed extract as much as possible for themselves and exploit their positions to live on the fat of the land. The fact that these things can happen shows that the kolhoz statutes are and

can be evaded with more or less impunity by local authorities. But it would be a mistake to suppose that a large proportion of kolhozy are mismanaged and the kolhozniki victimised. There are over 240,000 kolhozy and there is no reason to suppose that the majority are not reasonably well managed and the rights of their members properly observed. It would be unnecessary to lay so much stress on the existence of bad kolhozy were it not that exaggerated claims are made by Soviet propagandists and other interested persons regarding the contentment and prosperity of the Russian peasant under the Soviet régime. It is equally a mistake to suppose that in the bad old days of serfdom every landowner was a harsh and brutal slave-driver, indifferent to the sufferings of his human livestock. There were many humane and enlightened landowners who treated their serfs as human beings. That is not to say that serf-right was in any circumstances defensible, but it must be remembered that there were many obstacles in the way of individual landlords voluntarily freeing their serfs *en bloc*. In many cases it would have ruined the landowner and not appreciably have improved the economic position of the serfs themselves.

If the kolhoznik has improved his circumstances compared with the former agricultural labourer, he has forfeited much of the economic freedom of the independent peasant farmer. While in theory and legally he is a member having share-holding rights in a joint co-operative enterprise, he is too often regarded and treated as a mere wage-earning labourer by the president of his kolhoz and the

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local government and party officials, who are predominantly of urban and proletarian origin with little sympathy with or understanding of the peasant mentality and outlook. But time will remedy these faults. Education among the younger generation of peasants has already produced a large number of technically efficient and politically reliable agriculturists, who should at an increasing rate replace the proletarian element in rural administration. Collectivisation was imposed on a reluctant peasantry by force and often with callous brutality ; no serious effort was made to reconcile them to the new system and give them a genuine share and voice in its organisation. The Government's policy made it impossible to give any authority to that section of the peasantry who had formerly taken the lead and been the most progressive element. The so-called kulaks, in actual fact the more intelligent, enterprising and industrious peasant farmers, had to be replaced by young communists from the towns, uncommonly unfitted to carry out a radical reorganisation of an age-old and primitive agricultural system. But because collectivisation was carried out with incredible stupidity and lack of consideration, it cannot be condemned as inherently bad. In fact, the collective farm eventually offers better prospects to the average peasant than the separate independent peasant farm, but the peasant himself must lose most of his peasant characteristics and spiritually and economically approximate himself to the industrial proletarian.

## CHAPTER XXII

### EFFECTS OF MECHANISATION ON PRODUCTION

THE poverty of the pre-War Russian peasant was due partly to the overpopulation of the land and partly to his lack of capital. The two things were related ; for lack of capital the peasant farmer was compelled to adopt a primitive and extensive form of agriculture in response to which the average peasant holding produced barely enough for the subsistence of the farmer and his family, leaving no surplus to be reinvested. When a peasant rented additional land from a landowner, he usually did so not with the intention of producing a marketable surplus over and above the rent he paid, but because his nadiel neither provided sufficient food for, nor could fully utilise the labour of, his family. The rent he had to pay for hired land generally meant that the net return for his labour worked out at no more and often less than he would have earned had he worked on the same land as a hired labourer. The Bolsheviks quite rightly diagnosed the faults of the Russian peasant economy and saw that salvation lay in making the peasant more productive. The Imperial Government had come to the same conclusion years before and the Stolypin land reforms were the result. The Bolsheviks decided to increase the productivity of the peasants by increasing the fertility and yield of the soil and by extending the area cultivated.

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The average Russian peasant farm was too small for scientific farming ; the kolhoz farm often covering thousands of acres, and planting hundreds of acres to the same crop is eminently suited to mechanisation and scientific methods. The kolhoz ought in theory to reap more grain per acre than the former peasant farmer ; while the use of machinery should make it possible for a smaller number of workers to cultivate a larger area. In fact, since the kolhoz produces more per worker than the same land produced when farmed by a number of separate and independent peasants, the kolhozniki ought to be better off than the former peasant.

But has collectivisation and all it implies increased the average yield of the Russian arable land ? The average yields in European Russia for the years 1901-10 were : <sup>(40)</sup>

	(In Puds per Dessiatina)	
	Private Estates	Peasants' Nadel
Rye . . . . .	60	50
Winter wheat . . . . .	64	53
Spring wheat . . . . .	52	45

Converted into quintals per hectare :

	Private Estates	Peasants' Nadel
Rye . . . . .	9.0	7.5
Winter wheat . . . . .	9.6	8.0
Spring wheat . . . . .	7.8	6.8

The average yield for all grains in the decade 1881-90 was : <sup>(41)</sup>

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	Puds per Dessiatina	Quintals per Hectare
Private estates .	42	6·3
Peasant farms .	34	5·1

In the decade 1901–10 the average yield was : <sup>(42)</sup>

	Puds per Dessiatina	Quintals per Hectare
Private estates .	54	8·1
Peasant farms .	43	6·5

Post-revolutionary yields were : <sup>(43)</sup>

Year	(Quintals per Hectare)			
	All Grains	Rye	Winter Wheat	Spring Wheat
1922	7·6	7·9	8·8	6·5
1923	7·2	7·3	8·8	5·7
1924	6·2	6·7	7·4	5·3
1925	8·3	7·9	9·3	7·9
1926	8·2	8·3	9·7	7·7
1927	7·6	8·9	8·7	5·9
1928	7·9	7·8	7·8	8·0
1929	7·5	8·2	7·9	5·9
1930	8·5	8·4	10·6	7·3
1931	6·7	8·0	9·1	4·0
1932	7·0	8·4	7·4	5·1

The averages for the ten years 1923–32 work out as :

All Grains	Rye	Winter Wheat	Spring Wheat
7·5	8·0	8·7	6·3

The comparison with the averages for 1901–10 is :

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	1923-32	1901-10	
		Private Estates	Peasant Farms
All grains . . .	7.5 (100)	8.1 (108)	6.5 (87)
Rye . . .	8.0 (100)	9.0 (112)	7.5 (94)
Winter wheat . .	8.7 (100)	9.6 (110)	8.0 (92)
Spring wheat . .	6.3 (100)	7.8 (124)	6.8 (108)

The yield per hectare in the above-quoted ten years of Soviet farming was materially less than the yield on private estates in the first decade of the century, but a distinct improvement over the yield on pre-War peasant farms. Nothing like the increase in the average grain yield between the 1880's and the first decade of the 1900's was achieved by the Bolsheviki.

But the kolhozy were only beginning to get into their stride by 1932 and the harvests for the years up to 1930 were mainly gathered on independent peasant farms. Unfortunately it is impossible accurately to compare the yields after 1932 with previous years, because for reasons of their own the Bolsheviki invented a new method of calculating both yield and gross harvest in 1933. The principle adopted was to make a subjective estimate of the unharvested crop. This was done by taking samples, each from a square metre of ground, from the fields of a number of selected farms (in 1933, 5500 kolhozy were selected). From these samples the average "biological" yield (that is the gross quantity of grain in the standing crop) in the whole district was calculated, and to obtain the net garnered yield a deduction of 10 per cent was allowed to cover harvesting losses. Harvesting losses in Russia, however, are generally estimated

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to be 20 to 25 per cent of the standing crop. The garnered yield calculated in this way was at least 10 per cent better than if it had been measured by the old empirical methods. Average yields in 1933-35 compared with 1925-29 and 1928-32 may be expressed as follows : <sup>(44)</sup>

	In 60 lb. Bushels per Acre			
	1925-29	1928-32	1933-35	
			(*)	(†)
All grains .	11·7	11·2	12·9	11·6
Winter wheat .	12·7	12·7	14·0	12·6
Spring wheat .	10·5	9·0	11·7	10·6
Rye .	12·1	12·1	13·4	12·0

\* As officially reported.

† Reduced by 10 per cent.

In order to compare these figures with previous tables they must be converted into quintals per hectare as follows :

	1925-29	1928-32	1933-35	
			(*)	(†)
All grains .	7·8	7·5	8·6	7·8
Rye .	8·1	8·1	9·0	8·0
Winter wheat .	8·5	8·5	9·4	8·4
Spring wheat .	7·0	6·0	9·0	8·0

\* As officially reported.

† Reduced by 10 per cent.

The yields for 1909-13 taken from the same source were :

All grains .	7·4
Rye .	7·4
Winter wheat .	8·6
Spring wheat .	6·1

No yields for the past three years, 1936, 1937 and 1938 have been published. The gross harvest in 1936, owing to fairly serious drought in some regions, was below 1935, but the 1937 harvest was

said to have beaten all records. Drought again affected some important grain regions in 1938 and the harvest was probably 15 to 20 per cent below 1937. The average yield for these three years seems unlikely to have been much better than 1935. So far as can be calculated from the figures allowed to be published by the Soviet Government, the average grain yield throughout the country is now no greater than on the private estates before the Revolution, but is certainly better than on pre-War peasant land. To be fair to the Bolsheviks, allowance must be made for the fact that they have extended grain-growing into semi-arid steppe regions which can be cultivated only by extensive methods and where the yield is bound to be small; and that both wheat and rye are to-day being grown much further north than used to be considered possible, the yield, it goes without saying, being much smaller than in the traditional grain lands. Nevertheless, however one regards the grain problem, the enormous amount of capital invested in the means to produce agricultural machinery, in land improvement, in the selection and breeding of new and improved seed grain, in supplying chemical fertilisers, etc., has resulted in a disappointingly small improvement in the yield of the soil.

The second point to investigate is whether collectivisation has resulted in an expansion of the area cultivated per worker. An investigation <sup>(45)</sup> at the beginning of 1937, covering 96 per cent of all kolhozy, showed that the average amount of land per dvor was 18·8 hectares and that 46 per cent of kolhoz land was under the plough, which

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works out at 8.6 hectares of arable land per dvor. In 1927, 25 million independent peasant farms contained 109 million hectares of arable land, or 4.36 hectares per dvor, and according to the census of 1926, 114 million persons lived by agriculture. Thus the agricultural population per 100 hectares of cultivated land amounted to approximately 104, a density considerably higher than in Poland, Roumania and other East European countries. Pre-War figures are not strictly comparable because many peasants earned part of their income by seasonal employment on private estates, while the landless peasants, amounting to 11.6 per cent of all peasant dvory in 1917, earned their living in all sorts of ways, many of which had nothing to do with actual farming. In the years immediately before the War, the area of arable land per 100 of rural population in some of the most exclusively agricultural regions was : <sup>(46)</sup>

Middle Volga . . .	80 dessiatini
Central Black Earth . . .	67 „
Ukraine . . .	63 „
South-west . . .	48 „

These figures, converted into population per 100 hectares of cultivated land, may be compared with figures for 1936 as follows :

Pre-War	1936 <sup>(47)</sup>
Middle Volga . . . 115	Kuibyshev and Saratov Provinces . . . 67
Central Black Earth . 137	Kursk and Voronezh . 102
Ukraine . . . 146	Ukraine . . . 96
South-west . . . 191	Vinnitza and Kiev Provinces . . . 137

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Though it appears that the density of the rural population is now much less than before the war, the number of farm workers per hectare of farm land increased very remarkably in the period immediately following the close of War Communism :

NUMBER OF ACTUAL WORKERS PER 100 HECTARES <sup>(48)</sup>

	1913	1923
Middle Volga . .	38·3	78·5
Lower Volga . .	25·5	54·5
Central Black Earth .	47·1	71·3
Western Province .	60·8	92·8

In Eastern Europe the average is about 40 workers per 100 hectares of farm land.

In the first few years after the Revolution large numbers of industrial workers returned to their home villages because there was no work for them in the towns. The agricultural population was thus swollen by additional workers ; at the same time the area planted in 1923 to all crops was some 13 million hectares less than in 1913. The increase in agricultural labour was not a natural development and the surplus soon drifted back to the towns as industry revived. There was, however, another factor which tended towards an increase in the available labour per unit of sown land.

For reasons already explained (Chapter XI), the Revolution caused a rapid increase in the number of peasant farms, while the average amount of land in each farm diminished. As late as 1928 at least both the amount of land under cultivation per agricultural worker and per head of total agricultural population was certainly less than pre-War.

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There has been no census since 1926,\* when the rural population was 121 millions including non-agricultural workers. But since the total number of dvory fell from some 25 millions in 1928 to barely 20 millions in 1937 (including the remnants of the independent peasants), it seems fairly conclusive that the agricultural population declined during this period. Professor S. N. Prokopovich <sup>(49)</sup> has estimated that the total rural population at the beginning of 1938 was 104·7 millions and the peasant population 94·5 millions. The statement in *Planned Economy*, Nos. 9-10 of 1937, that the area of arable land in kolhozy amounted to 3 hectares per worker compared with 1·9 hectares per worker in peasant farms in 1928, is entirely credible.

The area of land sown to crops by kolhozy in 1935, the last year in which an official figure was vouchsafed, was 104·5 million hectares. It was somewhat more in 1938, if only because so much land had in the meantime been transferred from sovhozy to kolhozy, and a reasonable guess would be about 112 millions, especially as the monthly review for February 1938 issued by the Soviet Trade Delegation in the United Kingdom gave the 1938 sowing plan for kolhozy as 77·3 million hectares spring sowing and 34·2 million autumn sowing. In 1937 there were a little more than 18·5 million kolhoznik dvory, which at 4·8 members per dvor works out at 88·8 million persons, or about 79 per hundred hectares of farm land. It is not our purpose to make a detailed statistical study of

\* A census was taken in January 1937, but for some reason not clearly explained was cancelled. A substitute census was taken in January 1939, but no details had been published at the time of going to press.

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the relation between agricultural population and the area of land under cultivation. Our aim was to discover whether collectivisation had (a) increased the unit yield of the land and (b) increased the productivity of labour. Our conclusions are that the yield or fertility of the soil has not been very materially improved, but that the productivity of agricultural labour has been considerably increased.

In *Planned Economy*, No. 10 of 1938, an article entitled "The Productivity of Labour in Kolhozy" sets out to show how collectivisation has reduced the amount of labour expended in producing a given quantity of grain. One of the tables given was :

NUMBER OF MAN-DAYS LABOUR PER HECTARE OF  
WINTER GRAIN IN THE STEPPE REGIONS OF THE UKRAINE

	1888,	1916,	1923,	1933,	1936,	1937,
	16.8	11.8	11.1	6.3	3.35	2.48
Grain yield in quintals per man-day .	0.27	0.67	0.72	1.38	3.1	4.2

Even if these figures, as is more than probable, are based on selected farms and show a bias in favour of the Soviet régime, they certainly indicate that the output per kolhoz worker is much greater than in pre-collectivisation peasant farms, and that therefore the net income of the kolhoznik ought to be a good deal higher than that of the former peasant farmer. But these calculations leave out one important thing, and that is the labour expended in manufacturing, repairing and supplying

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with fuel, etc., the tractors, combines and other complex machinery. Somehow or other the land has to pay for the capital sunk in all the enormous tractor, combine and agricultural machinery works built by the Soviet Government, for their maintenance, the costs of manufacturing agricultural machinery and depreciation, which is very heavy, the cost of producing and transporting fuel, oil, etc., and other expenses in connection with mechanisation, including the salaries and wages of some 600,000 employees of the M.T.S.

The Bolsheviks make a great point of their claim that under their socialist régime the resources and products of industry are at the disposal of the community without cost — for instance they never cease pointing out that the money wages of the workers are a part only of their total remuneration of which a considerable part consists of the so-called social wage, that is the various social services rendered gratis. But it is obvious that the workers and peasants who produce the nation's income must in the long run pay for everything they consume. In other words, the nation as a whole cannot consume more than it produces. Even if the peasant population pays directly only for the use of the machinery provided by the State, it must pay indirectly through taxation (and that includes the compulsory deliveries of produce) for the capital invested in the means of producing that machinery.

The quantity of grain produced by one man's labour in one day is certainly much less for the whole country than the 4 quintals shown in the table on page 257. In an article on the production

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cost of producing grain in State grain farms in *Planned Economy*, No. 2, 1937, the quantity per man-day was given as —

(In Kilos)		
1933	1934	1935
61	89	83

(100 kilos = 1 quintal).

This illustrates the bewildering discrepancies in Soviet statistics that render the task of elucidating them and arriving at reasonably fair conclusions so perplexing.\* Apart from the difficulty of reconciling the figure of 83 kilos with 4 quintals, the data for the former are far from convincing. The factors given are :

Gross grain production per	
worker . . . . .	148 quintals
Area planted per worker . . . . .	21.8 hectares

From which one may reasonably conclude that the yield per hectare was 6.8 quintals.

Number of man-days labour	
applied to one hectare . . . . .	3.6

If one's arithmetic is not at fault, the amount of grain due to one man's labour for one day should amount to 1.9 quintals. However, there is no urgent reason for acquiring a headache over Soviet arithmetic, the point we are pursuing is that the average quantity of grain paid out as a labour-day dividend is not more than 4 kilos and that the

\* The probable explanation is that the larger quantity is the amount of grain per man-day labour actually applied to the land on which the grain is grown, that is in ploughing, sowing, cultivating and threshing ; whereas the smaller quantity represents the amount of grain derived by dividing the total grain crop by total number of man-days labour applied to the farm as a whole.

average quantity of grain produced per man-day labour actually applied to the land is probably not less than 200 kilos. It seems that the ordinary kolhoznik gets about one-fiftieth of the grain his labour has produced, together with some money derived from the sale of grain by the kolhoz. Say the money dividend comes to 1 rouble per working day, that is the price of at most 10 kilos of grain, the kolhoznik will get, in all, the equivalent of 14 kilos for producing 200. On the other hand, he gets the same dividend for every day's work, whether directly productive or not, such as fencing, ditching or working about the farm buildings. So that the total quantity of grain received by the working kolhoznik forms a considerably higher proportion to his total share in the gross harvest.

The tractor is to the Russian communist something more than a machine ; in his heart of hearts he regards it as in some way a mystical symbol of the new faith. The young tractor-driver who adores his machine is psychologically not unlike Kipling's lascar stoker who prayed to the high-pressure cylinder, though this does not prevent the tractor-driver over-driving and forgetting to oil his charge. The apotheosis of the machine leads to its use out of season as well as in season. It was the experience of the German farm concession (the celebrated Drusag which until 1932 farmed some 27,000 acres on the Kuban) that ploughing with animal power was often more economical than ploughing with mechanical power. Animals (they use oxen a lot in the North Caucasus) were very cheap to keep and wages were low ; a unit consisting of eight yoke, a four-furrow plough and two

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men, or a man and a boy, to guide the leading yoke, ploughed a hectare as efficiently and at a smaller total cost than a tractor. The latter, of course, came into its own when speed was a factor ; for instance, when autumn rain made the soil just right for sowing winter grain. The Russian, however, is inclined to think that, because the tractor turns over the soil at a prodigious rate and with lots of cheerful noise and bustle, it is doing it more economically and efficiently than any other method. In 1935 the official standard consumption of tractor fuel in spring ploughing one hectare was 21.6 kilos,<sup>(50)</sup> and in 1934 the price of one litre of benzine was about equal to the price of 10 kilos of grain.<sup>(51)</sup> 21 kilos of benzine would be about 23 litres,\* equal in cost to 230 kilos of grain. The quantity of corn and hay consumed by horses during the process of ploughing one hectare could not be more than the equivalent of 30 kilos of oats. According to the same authority,<sup>(52)</sup> the total consumption of fuel in producing and, presumably, harvesting and threshing one hectare of spring wheat in 1935 was 57.3 kilos, equal in cost to 63 litres, or 630 kilos of grain, or very nearly the whole crop ! Now the labour cost of producing one hectare of spring wheat in 1935 was 3.6 man-days (see page 259) and the average year's wage of State farm workers was some R.1500, or between R.4 and R.5 a day. The wage cost of producing one hectare of spring wheat therefore must have come to about R.16, equal to about 1½ quintals at the Government buying price. Thus it would appear that in 1935 on State grain

\* One litre of water weighs 1 kilogramme, and the specific gravity of benzine is approximately 0.90.

farms the money value of the average spring wheat crop (6·8 quintals per hectare) failed by an appreciable margin to cover the cost of the tractor fuel and wages involved in producing it. If these figures are correct, it is no wonder that State farms were being run at a loss.

In January 1933 Stalin, addressing the Central Committee of the Party, admitted that out of nearly 250,000 kolhozy only a few thousands, and out of 5000 State farms only a few dozens, were making both ends meet. There has been a steady improvement since 1933 ; but, as our researches have shown, the standard of living of the Russian kolhoznik is still at a low level, largely because his consumption has not increased in proportion to his output. The reason for this is without doubt the heavy cost of a too rapid and indiscriminate mechanisation. If the labour resources of the kolhozy were rationally and economically employed, a vast quantity of labour could be spared to be transferred to industry or employed to bring new land in Siberia and Central Asia under cultivation. Sir E. John Russell, Director of the Rothamsted Experimental Station, after his visit to Russia in 1937, wrote : <sup>(53)</sup>

The number of workers per 100 hectares is usually large according to Western ideas, especially if one assumes that much of the work is done by tractors and combines. On the farms I visited it was about two to four times as many as would have been needed in England, but the yields were less and the work not as well done, indicating a considerable difference in efficiency of the workers of the respective countries.

It is therefore scarcely surprising that the standard of living of the Russian kolhoznik is very low

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according to our standards. Not only is he less efficient than the agricultural worker in more advanced countries, and the yields from the soil much smaller, but the costs of mechanisation are very high, partly because of the high rate of depreciation of Soviet machinery and partly because of the high consumption of fuel, etc., of which a good deal more than the planned standard ration is used.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PEASANT

THE term "peasant" is to-day almost exclusively applied to the remnants of the independent peasants, who seem doomed soon to disappear altogether. Colloquially as well as officially the collectivised peasants are known as kolhozniki, while those who specialise are often contemptuous of even this appellation and like to be called "comrade tractorist", "comrade soil-expert", etc. In point of fact the kolhoznik is not a peasant in the usual sense of the word; neither can he legitimately be called an agricultural labourer, because this connotes employment for wages. Perhaps the best definition is a working co-partner or share-cropper with the State in an agricultural enterprise in which the State provides the capital. That the land and a considerable part of the means of production, buildings, implements and stock, were provided by the simple expedient of expropriating the former owners is immaterial. The State, having made good its claims to the capital, lends it permanently to the kolhoz, but, though no direct rent is demanded, the State takes good care to secure an ample return for its investment, allowing the kolhozniki to have what remains. The State brooks no interference with its plans; it decides what the kolhozy shall grow, how and when labour shall be

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applied and how much of the gross revenue shall be saved, that is, reinvested in means of production: the kolhozniki have the right only to decide matters of purely domestic import, such as the proportion of the surplus produce to be sold and the proportion to be distributed among themselves, and the percentage of the net revenue to be set aside for communal purposes, such as club-rooms and crèches. True, the rights of the kolhozniki are often overridden or ignored by the kolhoz management and rayon authorities.

In the Soviet constitution the kolhozy are classed as co-operative organisations. A large number of well-meaning people in our own country make the mistake of thinking that the word "co-operation" has much the same meaning in the U.S.S.R. as in the U.K. It has nothing of the kind. The members of a Soviet producing co-operative possess no personal and inalienable rights in the property of the organisation; they can be deprived of membership and packed off at any moment; their remuneration consists of whatever net income remains after the State has taken its share. The goods manufactured, the prices paid for raw material and the prices received for the finished output, are all regulated by the State. The principal right enjoyed by the members of a co-operative association is that of electing as their president the Government's or Party's nominee. This is not meant as an unfriendly criticism of Soviet co-operation, merely a statement of fact. After all, if the Bolsheviks like to use a word in a different connotation it is their own affair, and it would be senseless to disparage Soviet co-operative organisa-

tions because they do not conform to our own ideas of co-operation.

In case it should be objected that the above description of Soviet co-operation is not true to facts, some extracts may be quoted from a leading article in *Pravda* of 2nd December 1938, headed "In every Way to strengthen Industrial Co-operation" :

Sixty-nine thousand small industrial co-operative enterprises have the task in the current year of producing goods to the value of nearly R.15,000 million. Industrial co-operatives may produce somewhat more, if Party and Soviet organisations generally undertake their strengthening and extension on Bolshevik lines.

Wrecking activities . . . have brought confusion into the system of accounting with members of artels, have stifled the initiative of the best people, have created enormous and expensive staffs and have hung up decisions even on ordinary everyday problems.

In *Sever* [an artel manufacturing metal goods] there are 300 members, that is to say in the past ten months more than 400 persons joined and left the artel. It is not an artel, it is a corridor. The dismissal and enrolment of members takes place without reference to a general meeting of members . . . the most important matters are decided by the president alone, or at the best by the management.

This description is typical of many artels.

Even if such a state of affairs is exceptional, the fact that it can exist at all shows that the ordinary members of a co-operative have little faith in whatever rights of democratic control they may nominally possess.

To return to the kolhoz, the idea that it is a co-operative organisation in the British sense, is

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untenable. Therefore the definition of the kolhoznik as a working co-partner with the State is much more to the point than as a member of a co-operative enterprise. The effect on the kolhoznik is to liberate him from his former peasant prejudices, traditions and principles and approximate him to the proletariat. In the process the kolhoznik is losing or has lost all the picturesqueness as well as the mentality of the peasant. As Sir John Russell says :

There is little colour in the peasants' dress : the women commonly wear a white blouse and black skirt : the old Sarafan has gone, little or no embroidery is now made by the peasant girls. I came across no singing or dancing ; only technical and political lectures, in which the Party arranges that the proper views are put before the people.

One may legitimately regret the passing of the old peasant community with its patriarchal traditions, folklore and picturesque costumes and customs ; but that it was unprogressive, not to say primitive and inefficient, cannot be gainsaid. Nevertheless it is a mistake to imagine that the Russian village in the last decade before the War had not progressed. The cancellation of the land redemption payments and the abolition of the " mutual guarantee " freed the peasants from the legal remnants of serfdom and removed practically all their class disabilities. They began to demand and get local elementary education, which had formerly been withheld because the reactionary governing class believed that it tended to make the common people discontented, and increasing numbers of peasants secured university education through State Bur-

saries.\* Long before the reforms a surprisingly large number of peasants reached the universities and some well-known Russian scholars were of peasant origin, but the road was harder and required more determination than after the reforms.

The Revolution, however, gave enormously greater facilities to peasants to qualify themselves for intellectual careers. To-day a large number of rural doctors and a majority of the agronomists and other agricultural specialists are of peasant origin, while there are at least a million and a half tractor-drivers, lorry-drivers and agricultural machinery mechanics most of whom are drawn from the ranks of kolhozniki. For this, collectivisation rather than the Revolution is responsible. The conversion of the land from small peasant farms into large kolhozy created an enormous demand for agricultural experts of all kinds, and even the humblest kolhozniki had at least to be able to read the notices posted up by the management and fill up the forms and returns, without which nothing can be done in Soviet Russia. No less urgent was the demand for book-keepers and clerical workers; apart from all the internal accounting every kolhoz has to render at the very least eleven returns at intervals ranging from five days to six months to the Commissariat of agriculture, showing the progress of field work, the state of crops, sowing and harvesting operations, etc. The extension of education in the countryside and the provision of technical instruction and specialised training were

\* In an article, "Soviet Intelligentsia", which appeared in *Pravda* of 12th April 1939, it was stated that students of peasant origin in the Academy of Science in 1913 numbered 322 and formed 26 per cent of the total number of students.

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obviously dictated by the exigencies of the Government's agricultural policy quite as much as by any abstract motives of social uplift.

The most intelligent and ambitious among the younger kolhozniki are naturally those who seek education and training as specialists. In the process they tend to lose the typical peasant outlook and regard for the land, especially affection for a particular bit of land; in fact they become not farmers but agricultural experts and specialists. At the same time in character and way of life they acquire the ideas and philosophy of the proletarian worker. The picture the Soviet official mouth-pieces try to present is the kolhoznik content always to remain in his kolhoz with a material stake in its prosperity, but it is very doubtful whether the young specialist, at least, really regards his kolhoz in a different light from that in which an industrial worker regards his factory. Many would no doubt prefer to stand in the relation of employee to the State with a fixed and regular money wage than be a sort of partner of the State in a so-called co-operative enterprise receiving a share in an uncertain divisible surplus. It is said that young kolhoznik specialists, who of course earn more labour-days than the ordinary kolhoznik field hand, try to avoid having their own garden plots and livestock, while the older kolhozniki not only need these adjuncts to supplement their inadequate earnings, but get a certain psychological satisfaction in the private ownership of their miniature farms. All this has caused a tremendous rift between the older generation of genuine peasants and the younger generation of kol-

hozniki and has done a lot towards breaking up the family.

An appreciable and certainly increasing proportion of the younger kolhozniki despise the property-owner psychology and acquisitiveness of their elders and have no intention of becoming tied down by possessions. While they live at home they have to contribute their share towards the current expenses of the home, but they will not spend any money on unnecessary adornment or improvement of the family *Isba* (peasant cottage), nor on the family allotment, partly because they have no pronounced instinct of heritage and in any case hope to travel around before making up their mind whether to stick to farming or try some other career. In the old days the family held together and pooled its joint wealth and resources, and children who could earn wages or work on the farm were an asset. To-day they are a liability when small, and unprofitable when adolescent. At sixteen they can become members of the kolhoz and masters, so far as Bolshevism permits, of their own destinies. And since kolhozy are supposed to provide for their superannuated members, the idea of any filial duty towards aged parents is discouraged. Even if there is so far no tangible proof of a decline in the rural birth-rate, it may be fairly confidently assumed that such is the case; and it is equally reasonable to suppose that the rising generation, brought up to consider the family tradition an obsolete delusion and given increasing opportunities for study and travel, will be still more averse to losing its mobility in family responsibilities, however lightly these weigh on the Soviet citizen.

### *The Transformation of the Peasant*

The Bolsheviks deliberately planned to destroy the peasants as a separate and distinct class. Lenin quite frankly stigmatised them as a reactionary element, hopelessly class-conscious in the wrong way and infected with a degenerate sentiment for private property. The unfortunate part of it was that these instincts were most highly developed in those peasants who were the most efficient and industrious farmers ; and it was necessary, however regrettable from the purely economic point of view, physically to liquidate these kulaks. Thus the first result of Bolshevism on the peasants was to put a premium on inefficiency and laziness. Having eradicated the notion of work for mere personal gain, the Bolsheviks tried to inculcate the concept of work for abstract ideals. However, in spite of the honour attaching to the pioneers of Communism and the World Revolution, not the peasants alone, but the industrial workers also, proved deplorably unresponsive to intangible rewards. The genuine peasant, wherever he exists, cultivates his land and tends his stock not entirely and perhaps not even mainly with an eye to profit. Obviously he must do these things in order to live, but it is his tradition and his nature or instinct to fulfil what in a semi-mystical way he conceives as his duty towards his land. This sense of moral obligation is being rapidly collectivised out of the Soviet kolhoznik and replaced by the purely materialistic sentiments of the proletarian worker.

Mechanised and scientific farming is unquestionably a more efficient method of producing crops than the primitive methods of the

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small peasant proprietor ; but, to quote Dr. Schiller : <sup>(54)</sup>

That conceivably humanity may suffer intrinsically from all this mechanisation is a concept that from their very nature the Bolsheviki are incapable of grasping.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### CONCLUSIONS

My aim in the preceding chapters has been to show, with as little comment as possible, the conditions of the agricultural population in the Soviet collective farms. Nearly all the figures and facts quoted were obtained from Soviet sources, which are necessarily official, and usually present a favourable view. For example, most of the statistical figures of labour-day dividends and money incomes in Chapter XVII refer to limited areas or to a comparatively few kolhozy or kolhoznik dvory. Investigations into the earnings of kolhozniki, crop yields and so on are more likely to be carried out in relatively prosperous and well-organised districts, not wholly because these give the best results, but because in these districts the local authorities as well as the ordinary kolhozniki will, usually, be more intelligent and more enterprising than in backward districts; and for that reason will be better qualified to carry out research, will be more likely to appreciate the value of such research, and will afford better material on which to conduct research. The reader should therefore bear in mind that the descriptions of kolhozy and figures bearing on the income and standard of living of kolhozniki apply to the more advanced and progressive agricultural districts of European Russia and not to the whole country. In other

words, he is presented with a picture that usually represents something better than a true average.

If we draw up a sort of balance-sheet of success and failure, we are entitled not only to compare conditions to-day with what they were at the close of the Tsarist régime rather than with conditions at the close of the nineteenth century, but to take into consideration the very reasonable assumption that, had the Tsarist régime continued, economic and social conditions would have continued to improve, as they did during the decade before the War. The uncritical admirers of Bolshevism are chiefly persons who have no first-hand knowledge of Tsarist Russia ; they accept without question everything they are told about the poverty and privations of the pre-War peasants and workers, about the exploitation of the masses by the ruling class and the capitalists, and about the ruthless suppression of free thought. But, for obvious reasons, the Bolsheviks themselves are apt to underrate and abuse the old order and, to substantiate their case, are inclined to compare the present with the Russia of the 1890's instead of the 1910's. At the same time they make a detailed and analytical comparison impossible by keeping secret a great deal of the statistical information normally published by capitalist Governments, such as price and cost of living indices, output and consumption of consumers' goods, etc.

Up to the 1905 revolution the Tsarist Government had followed a policy of keeping the peasant estate as homogeneous and as exclusive as possible. The reforms introduced in 1905 and subsequent years practically removed the disabilities from the

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peasant as an individual. As a class, the peasants' political status remained in some ways inferior, for instance their representation in the Duma was proportionately much smaller than that of the landowning and capitalist classes. This inequality was continued by the Bolsheviks, for, prior to the Soviet constitution of 1936, the peasants had one deputy for each 125,000 electors against one for each 25,000 urban electors in the Congress of Soviets. At the close of the old régime the peasant was free to sell his farm and become a member of the industrial working class and had complete freedom of movement. On the other hand, he could not be arbitrarily dispossessed of his farm. The kolhoznik may be, and apparently often is, expelled from his kolhoz without any compensation and at the caprice of local party bosses. But he is not free to quit his kolhoz and seek employment elsewhere: for one thing, the Soviet passport regulations would prevent his entering and residing in the chief industrial districts and large towns without police authorisation; and for another, the kolhoznik who leaves his kolhoz without permission forfeits everything he leaves behind. So far as personal freedom of movement is concerned, the kolhoznik has no advantage over the peasant of 1906 to 1914.

The Soviet Government has brought elementary education within the reach of all. Illiteracy is rare among the younger generation, but rural schools under the Zemstvos were making great headway at the beginning of last century and there is no reason to suppose that, had the Tsarist régime continued, it would not by now have done as much

for elementary rural education as have the Bolsheviks. The latter have, admittedly, brought facilities for secondary and higher education nearer to the rural population than the Tsarist régime would probably have done. There is a perfectly good economic reason for this: the industrialisation of the country and the formation of large State and collective farms in place of the millions of small peasant holdings have created an enormous demand for engineers, scientists and experts of all sorts in addition to those required to replace very large numbers of emigrated and liquidated pre-revolutionary intelligentsia. Had the Tsarist Government survived and undertaken a programme, of industrial development comparable with that of the Soviet Government, it would have been compelled enormously to increase educational and training facilities for all classes.

The Tsarist Government used formerly to persecute religious sectarians, of whom there were many, and some very astonishing, examples. After 1906 religious freedom was legalised though the Jews are still confined to the Pale. The Bolsheviks nominally allow religious freedom, but if it be alleged that covert discrimination against sectarians did not cease in Tsarist Russia with the removal of legal disabilities, it cannot be denied that the practice of religious observances in Soviet Russia is frowned upon. The socialist school of thought attaches small importance to religious and intellectual freedom. Whether such freedom is intrinsically an asset may be argued: it is probably true that it is incompatible with the complete socialist State, and those who believe that complete

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socialism is the ultimate and highest ideal must, because of that creed, combat anything that does not accord with their eschatology. What is indisputable is that in such matters the Soviet Government's intolerance of any creed or precepts other than those it dictates is comparable with the most reactionary periods of Tsarism during the latter part of the reign of Alexander I and the reign of Alexander III, rather than with the more liberal policy that characterised the last ten years of the reign of Nicholas II.

Economically, the peasant has exchanged comparative liberty for a planned system in which personal initiative is practically excluded. Again, it is possible to argue that the freedom of individual enterprise is incompatible with socialism and therefore bad. The peasant, however, was persuaded to side with the Bolsheviks because he was given to understand that the land, which he had always considered himself defrauded of, would at last become his own together with the fruits thereof. Actually he surrenders to the State in one way and another at least as much, if not more, of his gross products as taxes and rent absorbed under the old régime, and he has much less voice in how he shall utilise his land and how he shall dispose of its products. It is argued that the independent peasant farmer was ignorant and inefficient, and undoubtedly pre-War peasant farming was exceedingly primitive and wasteful, but the following facts show that improvement was being made : <sup>(55)</sup>

In 1907 the sale of agricultural machinery

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through the Zemstvos amounted to R.6.8 million, in 1911 to R.12.1 million.

In 1911 the Department of Agriculture spent R.16.4 million on agricultural education, research, the provision of expert advisers and general agricultural assistance, in 1914, R.34.9 million.

In 1909 the agricultural experts of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Zemstvos totalled 2541, in 1912, 7270.

In two important agricultural regions, the Ukraine and the Central Agricultural Provinces (excluding Voronezh), the quantity of up-to-date agricultural machinery increased between 1910 and 1917 as follows :

	1910	1917
Steel ploughs .	802,393	1,200,980
Drills .	20,978	80,654
Harvesters .	17,796	49,242

Another point to be remembered is that latterly agricultural co-operation for the joint purchase of machinery, etc., for selling crops and for obtaining credit had been making great advances. While the peasant population lived under conditions predominantly of natural economy and maintenance farming, the co-operative movement could not gain a foothold. One must, of course, differentiate between the simple combination of labour and mutual self-help and the co-operative movement as a means of adaptation to capitalism. When the industrial development towards the close of last century created conditions favourable to com-

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mercial farming and the peasants began to grow cash crops and purchase factory-made goods, co-operative credit associations, consumer associations and producing and marketing associations rapidly spread. In 1915 the total membership of all credit associations exceeded nine million households, or nearly one-third of the total population. The development of co-operation and the enclosure movement were necessary corollaries of each other, and for this reason the socialists have always tended to disparage pre-War co-operation, especially the credit institutions, because these, more than any other single factor, enabled the more active and enterprising peasants to raise themselves out of the rut and become independent peasant proprietors. Whether in the sacred name of socialism it was good that the peasants should remain a homogeneous and uniform class is not the question. The point is that the co-operative movement gave a great impulse to peasant farming and began to liberate the peasants from exploitation by village usurers and the petty merchants and traders who infested the grain trade and produce markets. It may be true that the improvement in many aspects of peasant economics during the last few years before the War had not made a great deal of difference to the ordinary peasant masses ; and it would be an exaggeration to say that the agrarian problem had been satisfactorily solved. The Bolsheviks therefore cannot be charged with the destruction of a flourishing and prosperous peasantry and an economically sound and efficient agrarian system ; but at the outbreak of the Great War farming and the agricultural population were

not in such a state of misery and backwardness as the Bolsheviks pretend.

Their decision to amalgamate the peasants' small farms into large collectivised units was, of course, partly dictated by political and ideological consideration ; but there was also sound economic reasons, more especially in the Black Earth and Steppe regions. In the northern and north-western regions, where natural conditions are quite different, collectivisation has been less successful. The poor soil, the much heavier rainfall and the much greater proportion of forest land, render small-holdings with a large quantity of livestock a quite efficient if not the ideal form of land utilisation. In the open country to the south conditions are peculiarly suited to large-scale mechanical farming and in the very dry eastern and south-eastern regions extensive mechanised cultivation alone is feasible. With their tractors the Bolsheviks have succeeded in growing grain on the dry steppes that formerly provided only indifferent grazing for nomad herds.

Although both before and after the Revolution credit co-operatives provided the peasants with the means of accumulating capital, the total capital accumulation depended on the unorganised mass of individual peasants, some of whom preferred to hoard while others over-invested in uneconomic ways. The savings and investments of collective farms can be and are strictly controlled by the State. It must be understood that the savings left at the disposal of the farm itself in the form of its indivisible fund (see page 140) are a very small part of the real capital accumulation effected by

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the State's arbitrary depression of agricultural earnings, which pays for the tractors and machinery of the M.T.S., irrigation works, roads, canning factories, freezing works, etc. This must not be taken to mean that all agricultural savings are reinvested in ways that directly benefit farming; the greater part of the capital invested each year in industry generally, in housing, in transport and in defence, is also derived from the surplus production of the agricultural population. According to the Union budget figures (see page 192) it would seem that the agricultural section of the community provides over half the State's revenue; while, according to the statistical department of Gosplan (the State Planning Commission), in 1933 agriculture created only 16 per cent of the national income, industry being credited with 52 per cent, from which it seems fair to conclude that the agricultural population surrenders a far larger proportion of its *per capita* income to the State than the industrial proletariat. In other words, the nett reward of farm labour is far inferior to that of factory labour.

Russian rulers have always seemed to take a longer view than others, perhaps because of the vast area they rule over and the enormous natural resources awaiting development. And though the Bolsheviks have shown some sort of impatience in their short-term policy of industrialisation, their programme of economic development is obviously planned with a long-term design. The fact that their agricultural policy has so far widened rather than closed the gap between the agricultural labourer and the industrial worker is not conclusive

evidence that the collectivisation of the peasants is a failure. Even if the standard of living of the kolhozniki is still extremely low — as regards consumption of food, clothing and the ordinary necessities of life, certainly no higher than the average standard among the peasants of Eastern Europe — collectivisation has possibly saved the country from progressive impoverishment due to overpopulation and the consequent deficient utilisation of the land. Nevertheless the low earnings of the kolhozniki are partly attributable to mistakes in the execution of the Bolshevik agrarian policy. For instance, in view of the large supply of very cheap and unexacting agricultural labour the investment of enormous sums in the manufacture of machinery was wasteful and unjustifiable. Tractors and machinery were necessary for the opening-up and colonisation of new areas, but were redundant and uneconomic in Central and South Russia and the Ukraine, where at most they should have been used as subsidiary aids to animal draught power and not *vice versa*. Of course, after the loss of over half the draught animals in the collectivisation war, mechanical traction became indispensable, so that the original mistake was to infuriate the peasants until they slaughtered their animals. The inefficient use of machinery too has been responsible for the continued low standard of crop yields; when tractors break down, or stand idle for lack of fuel, sowing is delayed, and when combine harvesters are not properly handled they allow a lot of grain to escape. But these matters will be put right sooner or later and the question is whether, when the scientific methods and mechanical aids

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introduced by the Bolsheviks have become fully understood and efficiently operated, the kolhozniki can look forward to enjoying as high a standard of living as the industrial proletarian.

According to the early Bolshevik doctrine, labour should be rewarded according to its quality, that is, the amount of energy expended and the skill required, and, if this principle were put into practice, an hour's labour devoted to, say, ploughing, ought to earn about the same reward as an hour's work by an ordinary factory machine-minder. But in Soviet Russia, just as in capitalist countries, remuneration is still determined by supply and demand and the market value of the product of labour. The agricultural labourer in a unit of time produces less than the industrial worker because he has much less machinery to work with; also the kolhoznik, because he does not receive a fixed wage, may be set to perform tasks that would be uneconomical if his time were paid for at standard wage rates. Although the number of kolhozniki and State farm labourers to-day must be considerably less than the number of individual peasant workers before collectivisation, agricultural labour is still far in excess of absolute requirements. In Eastern and South-eastern Europe, where both the natural conditions and the type of farming resemble Central and Southern Russia, the farm population per 100 hectares of farm land averages some 70 to 80 persons; in the Central Agricultural region of Russia the number of workers only to the 100 hectares was over 50 in 1913 and nearly 80 in 1923, and in 1935 the farm population of the

whole country amounted to over 80 per 100 hectares of arable land. If agricultural labour were rationalised and machinery economically and efficiently operated, it would probably be found that about half the present available labour would be sufficient for the present type of farming.\*

There are three main ways in which the excess labour might be absorbed :

- (1) By transfer to industrial employment.
- (2) By colonisation of the sparsely populated areas in Asiatic Russia.
- (3) By more intensive methods of farming.

Since 1928 industry has absorbed probably between 12 and 15 millions of rural population, but since 1932 the rate of increase in wage-earners in all branches of economic activity has slowed down. Since industrial labour is steadily increasing in efficiency and productivity, it is unlikely that the demand will again expand at the same rate as during the First Five-Year Plan, when the total number of wage-earners doubled.

Farm colonisation of the sparsely populated regions of Asiatic Russia has not yet been organised on a large scale by the Soviet Government. Of course hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people from European Russia have been transplanted to Siberia, some voluntarily and many involuntarily, but by far the greater part of these are employed in new industrial enterprises, in forestry and mining, and in railway, road and canal construction. In the Far East the Government has encouraged voluntary settlement, predomi-

\* See Appendix I.

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nantly of time-expired Red Army soldiers, for reasons of military defence. In a way these settlements bear a resemblance to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Cossack settlements in South and South-eastern Russia. Their purpose is similar — to protect the marches against inroads by Asiatic enemies; in the old days Tatar and Turkoman tribes, to-day the Japanese. Like the Cossacks, the Soviet settlers enjoy tax exemption, and the kolhozniki are allowed to possess considerably more private property than in European Russia. In the course of five years some 24,000 to 25,000 peasant families (between 100,000 and 125,000 individuals) were settled in Eastern Siberia. Agricultural settlement in the rest of Siberia has been almost negligible; as a matter of fact Soviet population statistics for 1927 and 1933 show an absolute fall in the rural population of Siberia excluding the Far East and the Yakut autonomous republic. Nothing like the pre-War peasant immigration into Siberia, which amounted to over 3½ millions in the years 1906 to 1914, has been seen under the Soviet régime. Although a large part of the easily accessible Siberian black soil land is already occupied, there remain vast areas suitable for agricultural settlement if and when means of transport are provided. In European Russia virgin land suitable for settlement is almost non-existent. In most of the central and southern agricultural regions the ratio of arable land to forest and pasture is already too large.

In 1935 the Soviet Government began tentatively to organise voluntary peasant emigration to

Siberia, apparently with the aim of relieving congestion in European Russia rather than for political or military reasons. At the end of 1937 a decree was published laying down the conditions under which peasants could emigrate to approved regions. It is scarcely necessary to say that no peasant may emigrate as an independent farmer; individuals or families may join an existing kolhozy or a number of families may emigrate as a unit to form a new kolhoz. To these the State lends a sum of money up to fifteen years if a house has to be built, and up to five years to buy farm stock. Stock left behind is replaced as nearly as possible in equivalent quantity and quality, and tax relief is granted for a certain number of years. Assistance of this description is not confined to emigrants to new lands in Siberia. The collectivisation campaign of 1930 and 1931 caused gaps in the agricultural population, particularly in the south-east and parts of South Russia, where the resistance was greatest. Some Cossack settlements in the North Caucasus were entirely depopulated, and in some villages so many peasants were liquidated and so many others succumbed to starvation that part of the land fell out of cultivation. Immigrants from other parts of the country are now being encouraged and assisted to repopulate these gaps.

How much relief can be expected from an intensification of agriculture is uncertain. Undoubtedly yields could be increased in practically all the agricultural districts. Even now the average yield from sovhoz and kolhoz land is less than the yields of the better-managed landowners' farms before the War. But to increase the grain yield is

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not so much a matter of employing more labour as of better methods of cultivation, and the use of fertilisers, etc., the cost of which would absorb a considerable part of the increased production. If the present area of agricultural land is to provide full employment for the present agricultural population, it could do so only if large areas under the extensive cultivation of grain were transferred to the intensive cultivation of luxury and industrial crops such as fruit, vegetables, flax, tobacco, etc., and a considerable expansion effected in the output of animal products. But the production of luxury foodstuffs, costing much more to produce than grain, potatoes, etc., can be undertaken only if there is a market for them, and at present the urban population is too poor to afford luxuries in large quantities. However, the fact that both kolhozy and individual kolhozniki within reach of important city markets are encouraged to produce poultry, eggs, butter, fruit and vegetables, and that they are on the whole more prosperous than the kolhozy in the depths of the country, condemned to grow mainly grain, indicates that the prospects for the intensive cultivation of luxury foodstuffs will increase as the purchasing power of the urban population expands. Sooner or later the production of consumers' goods will expand more rapidly than capital goods and the rate of saving will be modified to a more tolerable burden, and both the land worker and the industrial worker will benefit from mutually expanding markets.

No mention so far has been made of the export market for kolhoz produce. Since external trade is a strict Government monopoly and since

exports are made almost entirely for procuring the means of buying capital goods, the Russian consumer has derived no tangible benefit from exports; on the contrary, his own consumption has been correspondingly curtailed. But there is no reason to suppose that when the craze for building new factory after new factory has moderated, imports of consumers' goods will still be excluded. If, as seems likely, the world market price of grain remains unprofitable, Russia and Siberia possess enormous potentialities for the production of exportable surpluses of dairy and poultry produce, fruit and vegetables, not to mention fish and game. The export of these more or less luxury commodities, except butter and eggs, was not highly developed before the War, because the peasants' poverty compelled them to grow the crops that provided the largest quantity of food to the acre, that is mainly grain and potatoes, and because there were no big canning enterprises. The capacity of the Soviet canning industry is already over a thousand million tins a year.

If one regards having more to eat and more to wear as the most important things in life, then it is possible that the kolhoznik will eventually enjoy a standard of living better than the average independent peasant could have attained, and more nearly approaching that of the factory worker. But in return for these material things he will have lost the spiritual values that differentiate the peasant from the urban proletarian. He will be merely a mechanic or a specialist, and the old peasant lore and accumulated and instinctive knowledge of the land and its needs will be replaced

### *Conclusions*

by the laboratory and its test-tubes. Possibly the laboratory will prove more effective in a purely material way than the instinct of the farmer, but to some minds mere material progress is not the only thing that matters. Already the old traditional peasant customs, rites and arts are dying out. The peasant music and dances are becoming less and less spontaneous in the village and will soon be perpetuated only on the stage, while the traditional peasant patterns and designs for embroidery, lace and wood-carving are becoming mechanically stereotyped. The domestic arts, too, are failing, as those who are fortunate enough to be able to afford domestic servants find to their grief. Few of the younger women can cook or sew like their mothers, partly perhaps because of the lack of materials, but more because of the growing habit of community eating, the use of canned foods and the increasing supply of factory mass-produced clothing. From the Government's point of view perhaps the one evil will be a progressive decline in the natural increase of population, for it seems inevitable that the new type of sophisticated kolhoznik will lack the *Vermehrungsfreudigkeit* (the urge to reproduce) of the genuine peasant. Though for an agricultural country European Russia is very densely populated, the density of population over the whole habitable regions in the U.S.S.R. is among the lowest in the world, and there is more reason for the Russians to multiply than for the nations of the highly developed and densely populated Western countries.



## NOTE ON APPENDICES

SOVIET economic legislation affecting methods and practice rather than principles is apt to be remarkably ephemeral. Since there was no fund of accumulated knowledge and experience to guide the Soviet leaders in their task of administering a socialist State, and since many of the abstract theories propounded by the nineteenth century doctrinaires proved impracticable, the Soviet Government had to find the way by a process of trial and error. When a measure fails to produce the desired result it is unhesitatingly modified or entirely scrapped, sometimes after a most immature life. And in consequence of the frequency of new decrees it is a practical impossibility to produce a book, like the present one, completely up to date in all particulars. To attempt to incorporate the very latest legislation in the text would mean constant amendments and rewriting whole passages, if not chapters; therefore the only feasible way of including the most recent changes and modifications, after the body of the book has been written, is to present them in the form of appendices, to which references are made in the appropriate passages in the main text.



## APPENDIX I

### SURPLUS LABOUR IN KOLHOZY

THE December 1938 number of *Planned Economy*, not issued until February 1939, and received after the foregoing chapters had been completed, contained an article "Concerning the Balance of Labour in Kolhozy", providing some interesting information and figures relating to the total number of active kolhozniki in the Province of Voronezh, the number of days' work performed on kolhoz farm land and on the kolhozniki's own garden allotments, etc.

Voronezh is a medium-sized province lying south-east of Moscow and mainly in the Black Earth zone. Over 50 per cent of the whole area is under crops and the agricultural population is moderately dense for European Russia. In fact, Voronezh Province is typical of the Central Russian grain-producing regions. In 1937 there were in the whole province 1,053,000 able-bodied kolhozniki of both sexes between the ages of 16 and 59, of whom 477,100 were men and 576,200 were women. According to *Socialist Construction* in 1935 there were 8927 kolhozy and 909,200 kolhoz dvory and the total area of the kolhoz land under crops was 4,904,000 hectares, of which 3,901,000 were under grain. Presuming that the number of kolhozy, etc., were approximately the same in 1937 as in 1935, the following facts emerge :

Average number of active workers per kolhoz	123·4
"                  "                  "                  dvor	1·16
Average number of hectares under crops to each worker	4·7
Average number of hectares under crops to each dvor	5·4

Allowing for public holidays, leave, sickness, etc., the theoretical maximum number of working days in the year

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would be for men 281.5, and for women 278.5. The average number of labour-days earned in respect of a day's work was 1.36, in connection with which it is worth noting that the value of an average day's work during the period 1933 to 1937 increased as follows :

	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Average labour-days earned per day's work . . .	0.96	1.06	1.11	1.20	1.36

According to provincial statistics, presumably compiled from kolhoz returns, the total number of labour-days credited to all kolhozniki in 1937 came to 226,973,000, which at the ratio 1.36 : 1 represent 166,892,000 actual days' work. This, however, includes labour-days earned by the casual work of old people and youngsters under 16. The proportion of total work performed by the various age groups was :

	Per cent
Young persons between 12 and 15 .	4.82
Old people over 60 . . . . .	5.20
Able-bodied men between 16 and 59 .	58.00
Able-bodied women between 16 and 59	31.98

Thus the total number of days' work performed by able-bodied men was 96,797,000 and by able-bodied women 53,372,000, or 203 days on the average by each man and 93 days by each woman.

July is the month in which, on account of harvesting, farm work reaches its peak. In July 1937, 21,529,000 days' work were performed by all groups in the following proportions :

	Per cent	Days
Young persons . . . . .	7.95	1,711,600
Aged persons . . . . .	4.88	1,050,600
Able-bodied men . . . . .	46.53	10,017,400
Able-bodied women . . . . .	40.64	8,749,400

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Thus each man worked 20 days and each woman 15 days on an average out of a theoretical monthly maximum of 27 working days in peak periods.

The total time devoted by kolhozniki to cultivating their own allotments and attending to their own livestock amounts to 29.8 per cent of the time worked on the kolhoz farm. The women, rather naturally, do most of the work on the family allotment, spending 68.8 per cent of the number of hours worked on the kolhoz farm on their own little enterprise compared with only 8.2 per cent spent by the men. Obviously the kolhoznik cannot confine his attentions to his own allotment to those days when he is not working for the kolhoz ; tending his livestock is a daily job, and even his cabbage-patch will receive attention after his day's work with his brigade is ended. So when trying to determine how much employment the private holdings provide, that is employment during normal working hours which might otherwise be idle, the so-to-speak overtime or spare-time work should be disregarded. Assuming that the kolhoznik spends the same amount of time on his allotment every day, only those days on which he is not employed by the kolhoz will count as employment, and since there are about 80 working days in the year when the men are not with their brigade and about 190 when the women are unemployed, the actual time worked on their own allotments that can legitimately be regarded as employment is for men 2.4 per cent and for women 46.9 per cent of the total time spent in working for the kolhoz. This line of reasoning does not seem particularly convincing, because one would naturally imagine that the kolhozniki spend a lot more time on their allotments on their free days than on days when they are working for the kolhoz. But anyway, the average time during normal working hours spent by the kolhoznik on his own affairs must be very largely a matter of guesswork, and one way of guessing is probably as good as another. In the whole province the total number of days' work provided by private allotments, according to the above premises, comes to 2,323,000 for men and 25,031,000 for women. The following tables show the total amount

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of employment provided by kolhoz and private farming and the difference between this and the full theoretical labour capacity :

	Men	Women	Both Sexes
1. Total numbers of able-bodied workers of working age (16-59) in thousands . . . .	477.1	576.2	1,053.3
2. Utilisation of available labour resources :			
(A) On kolhoz land, in thousands of man working days . . . .	96,797	53,372	150,169
In thousands of full "labour years" * . .	343.9	191.6	535.5
(B) On private allotments, in thousands of man working days . . . .	2,323	25,031	27,354
In thousands of full "labour years" * . .	8.3	89.9	98.2

\* Taking a man's full working year as 281.5 days and a woman's at 278.5 days.

The amount of total theoretical labour resources not utilised would be :

	Men	Women	Both Sexes
Full labour resources in thousands of "men labour years" . . . .	477.1	576.2	1,053.3
Actual utilisation of labour in men-years :			
(A) On kolhoz land . . . .	343.9	191.6	535.3
(B) On private allotments . . . .	8.3	89.9	98.2
Total . . . .	352.2	281.5	633.5
Unutilised labour :			
(A) In men-years . . . .	124.9	294.7	419.8
(B) In percentage of full available resources . . . .	26.2	57.1	39.8

## Appendix I

It must again be emphasised that the above is merely a theoretical calculation, and even if it corresponds approximately with the actual facts, does not mean that the men are idle for about a quarter or the women for about half of the working time. A certain number of men and perhaps a few of the women are always absent on employment elsewhere, a certain number of men and women are engaged in some sort of subsidiary enterprise or in handicraft and, of course, the women must spend a certain amount of their time on domestic affairs, making clothing, etc. According to the kolhoz returns in January and July 1937, the following proportions of total labour resources in adults of working age actually took part in kolhoz farm work :

	January	July
Men . . .	68.2	84.8
Women . . .	21.2	68.2

Thus, even in the busiest month of the year about 15 per cent of the men and about 30 per cent of the women were surplus to labour requirements on the farms. Returns for July 1938 show that in that month about 148,500 kolhozniki (27,200 men and 121,300 women) took no part in any work connected with their kolhozy. The average for the whole year would, of course, be considerably higher. According to the annual returns for 1937, it appears that at the end of the year 195,500 persons in all were on *othod*, that is employed in industry or in some other way away from home, of whom about 148,200 were men. This figure would be above the average because it refers to winter-time. If during the whole of 1937 there were some 125,000 potential man-years labour unutilised on the kolhozy, there cannot have been much absolute idleness, because about an equivalent amount of labour found employment elsewhere. In regard to the women one would naturally expect to find a much higher degree of theoretical unemployment, because domestic occupations are not taken into consideration. It would seem that the women spent about half their working time in looking after their houses, their children, cooking for their families,

## *The Economics of Soviet Agriculture*

etc., which seems by no means an unreasonable allowance.

The above figures are further corroborated by returns of labour-days earned in 1937, from which it appears that 126,400 kolhozniki of working age of both sexes did not earn a single labour-day and that 285,300 earned between one and fifty labour-days only. It seems fairly reasonable to suppose that most of the 126,400 who never earned a single labour-day were men on othod, while the 285,300 who earned from one to fifty labour-days apiece were women who just did an odd day's work for the kolhoz in an emergency or when their domestic duties gave them the time. It is worth noting that these figures agree fairly closely with the theoretically calculated unutilised labour given in the above table.

Apparently there is not much absolute idleness on kolhoz farms, at any rate in Voronezh Province. But it is clear that the kolhoz population is, even in present circumstances, considerably in excess of actual labour requirements and it is almost certainly the case that a good deal of labour is often employed on more or less unproductive and uneconomic tasks because it costs nothing. Soviet newspapers and illustrated journals are very fond of publishing photographs of large parties of men and women enjoying an *al fresco* lunch in the harvest fields, with a row of combine harvesters in the background. What they do is a mystery, for the combine only requires two men, and the lorries to pick up and carry off the full sacks another two men apiece, while the number of people in the photograph would be enough to do all the cutting, binding and stooking by hand. The area of crop (4.6 hectares) per able-bodied kolhoznik is considerably larger in Voronezh than the average for the whole of the country, judging by the conclusions arrived at in Chapter XXII. But nearly 80 per cent of crops is grain which requires much less labour than, say, sugar beet. If labour and machines were employed to the best advantage and with proper efficient organisation it seems fairly safe to conclude that quite 50 per cent of the labour power of kolhozy would be surplus to absolute requirements.

A point of some interest brought out by the above is

### *Appendix I*

that the number of adult workers per dvor is considerably lower than the number, about 1.74, quoted on page 218 and based on 1935 statistics. This lends some support, somewhat tenuous perhaps but still significant, to the supposition that kolhoz families are declining.

## APPENDIX II

### NORMAL TASKS AND REMUNERATION OF TRACTOR DRIVERS

A DECREE of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Party, dated 8th March 1939, rescinded the rules for payment of tractor-drivers given at the end of Chapter XVII and also requires certain modifications to Chapter XVI.

The preamble of the new Decree, explaining that the previous system (see page 179) proved to be too complicated and confusing, substitutes the following :

The Commissariat of Agriculture determines and lays down the normal task per shift (*i.e.* the number of hectares to be ploughed, etc.) for tractor-drivers according to republics and provinces. The Council of People's Commissars of the republics and the provincial governments may increase or reduce these standards for individual M.T.S. by not more than 15 per cent, having consideration to the depth of ploughing, nature and condition of the soil, etc. The directors of M.T.S. may likewise increase or reduce up to 10 per cent daily tasks in their own MTS on account of the state of the soil, etc., in particular areas, provided that any such reductions do not involve decreasing the total task laid down for the whole M.T.S.

Remuneration of tractor-drivers for all forms of work, excluding harvesting and thrashing, is based on a flat rate of four labour-days per shift when working with wheeled tractors and five labour-days per shift when working with caterpillar tractors. Tractor-drivers who have been working for M.T.S. for not less than one year and who have qualified as first-class drivers receive a bonus of 10 per cent over the flat rate for all classes of work.

Progressive premiums are paid on the following scale : For exceeding the normal shift task by 25 per cent, 25 per cent over the basic rate : for exceeding the normal shift task by more than 25 per cent and less than 50 per cent,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times the

## *Appendix II*

basic rate : for exceeding the normal shift task by more than 50 per cent, twice the basic rate.

In order to prevent a tractor standing idle the director of the M.T.S. may in exceptional cases allow overtime to be worked, for which payment is made at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times the standard rate.

In addition to the above, tractor drivers who exceed their total seasonal task, provided their work is satisfactory, receive for every excess hectare (in terms of ploughing soft soil) a bonus of half a labour-day if working with wheel tractors, and a fifth of a labour-day if working with caterpillar tractors.

Tractor-drivers do not receive any payment for unproductive work, such as driving their machines from the premises of the M.T.S. to the fields. Tractor-drivers who do not plough to the proper depth are fined an amount equal to 50 per cent of the value of the fuel consumed, and the brigadier in charge is fined 10 per cent of the cost of the fuel. Double rates are paid both to tractor-drivers, brigadiers and their assistants who work on the fields during the first few days after the official opening of the spring sowing season.

In addition to the guaranteed money payment of R.2.50 per shift payable monthly by the M.T.S., according to the Decree of the 13th January 1939 (see page 153), tractor-drivers, brigadiers and their assistants shall receive from the kolhozy on whose land they have worked a grain dividend per labour-day equal to that distributed to the kolhozniki, or three kilograms of grain, whichever is the greater ; while should the money value of the kolhoz labour-day dividend exceed the guaranteed minimum of R.2.50, they shall be paid the difference by the kolhoz. Kolhozy engaged in producing fruit, vegetables, industrial raw material or other kinds of special crops which are unsuitable for distribution as dividends in kind, must pay, in lieu of the dividend in kind, a money dividend of not less than R.2.50 (that is, in addition to the guaranteed money payment of the same amount). The brigadier and assistant brigadier of a tractor brigade whose work is of high quality shall receive from the M.T.S. monthly premiums amounting to 75 kopeks and 50 kopeks respectively for every labour-day earned.

The tractor-brigadiers shall be credited with 30 per cent, and assistant brigadiers with 20 per cent more labour-days for the same time worked than the average number of labour-days earned by the tractor-drivers. Each tractor brigade shall consist of not less than four wheel tractors or not less than three tractors, if one or more is a caterpillar tractor.

### *The Economics of Soviet Agriculture*

Tractor-drivers who reduce their fuel consumption below the official allowance receive a premium amounting to 50 per cent and the brigadier 20 per cent of the cost of the fuel saved. On the other hand, the extravagant tractor-driver is fined  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times and his brigadier 10 per cent of the cost of the excess fuel consumed.

While tractors are working on its fields, the kolhoz shall provide the brigadiers and drivers with food (except bread) at prices no higher than those ruling in the local co-operative or State shops. The quantity of bread consumed shall be deducted from the grain dividend earned.

## APPENDIX III

### RESTRICTIONS ON PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

THE abuse of the kolhoznik's right to private property had become so widespread in the spring of 1939 that a special decree was issued on 27th May entitled, "Concerning Measures for protecting the Communal Land of Kolhozy from being squandered".

This decree began by stating that gross breaches of the Communist Party's policy and the collective farm statutes were being committed, in that many kolhozniki had in practice reverted to individual enterprise, taking little or no part in the activities of their kolhozy. Not only were the private allotments larger than the collective farm statutes permitted, but were so interspersed among the kolhoz farmland that it was often hard to say which fields belonged to the kolhoz and which to the individual kolhozniki. Extra land was obtained "by the fictitious separation of the kolhoznik's family, so that the dvor fraudulently obtains allotments for each separate member". (The statutes lay down the maximum amount of land in the private use of the dvor, that is the household, irrespective of the number of persons. A kolhoznik is entitled to a separate allotment only when he leaves the family dvor and sets up his own establishment. Presumably what occurred was that, on reaching the age of sixteen, the young kolhoznik ostensibly left the family home and set up on his own account so as to be in a position to claim his separate allotment. In fact, however, the allotment was added to the family property and worked by the family as a whole for its collective benefit.) Apparently, too, kolhozniki who for some reason could not and did not wish to work their allotments, were in the habit of renting them to other kolhozniki able to make use of extra land.

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As a result of these illegal extensions of private property many kolhozniki found little time to work on the kolhoz ; these sham kolhozniki earned perhaps twenty or thirty labour-days in the year and a few did not even trouble to earn any at all. At the same time they enjoyed all the advantages and privileges of membership of a kolhoz, the chief being the much lower rate of taxation compared with the authentic independent peasants. The alleged shortage of labour in kolhozy was entirely due to many kolhozniki taking practically no part in the collective work. If all kolhozniki worked as and when required there would be a large surplus of agricultural labour.

The decree specifically forbids the allotment of more than the maximum amount of land per dvor and directs that all private allotments shall be segregated from the kolhoz land by definite boundaries. Leasing of land by one kolhoznik to another is prohibited, and the leasing of hay-fields and woods by the kolhoz to kolhozniki or other private persons will result in the kolhoz president being expelled and charged with a breach of the law.

In some parts of the country, where individual peasant farms of the hutir type existed, the peasants when collectivised continued to live in their cottages in the middle of the kolhoz fields. Naturally their private allotments consisted of the land around the cottage. These kolhozniki are now to be congregated together in some convenient spot (presumably in the village if one already exists on the farm) and will receive new allotments where they are resettled. Apparently their old cottages and buildings will be pulled down and the sites incorporated into the kolhoz fields.

In future every able-bodied kolhoznik must earn a given minimum number of labour-days in the year : in the cotton regions, 100 ; in a number of specified provinces, including the northern half of European Russia and some parts of Siberia, 60 ; and in the rest of the country, including the Ukraine and the central and southern agricultural regions, 80 labour-days. It is not stated in the decree whether these minima are to apply to all able-bodied kolhozniki indifferently. While

### *Appendix III*

a man would not be half employed if he earned no more than 80 labour-days, representing 60 to 80 days' actual work, his wife, especially if she had several children, would probably find it a tax on her time and energies to earn 80 labour-days ; which would probably mean 80 to 100 days' actual work, since the labour-day task is the same both for men and women, and in field work a woman would scarcely perform as much in a given time as a man. Kolhozniki who do not earn their minimum number of labour-days will be expelled.

The decree also deals with the remnants of the individual peasants, limiting the farm-land they may occupy exclusive of the homestead to the following :

In cotton regions when irrigated,  $\frac{1}{10}$  hectare ( $\frac{1}{4}$  acre).

In cotton regions when not irrigated,  $\frac{1}{2}$  hectare ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  acres).

In vegetable and sugar beet regions,  $\frac{1}{2}$  hectare ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  acres).

In all other regions up to 1 hectare ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres).

In irrigated districts the land occupied by the peasant's cottage, outbuildings, etc., must not exceed  $\frac{1}{10}$  hectare (a space roughly  $30 \times 40$  yards), in all other places  $\frac{1}{2}$  hectare. (This reduces the amount of land an independent may hold to about the same as the private allotments allowed to kolhozniki.)

In conclusion, the decree states that, as there are some regions where the population is so dense that there is insufficient land to give full employment to the kolhozniki and no more reserve land from which to give them private allotments, a resettlement of the surplus population in sparsely populated areas (mainly in Asiatic Russia) must be undertaken. For this purpose a special Resettlement Administration will be established under the Council of People's Commissars with corresponding organs in all republics and provinces.



## GLOSSARY

- Artel.* An association for co-operative employment for wages, for handicraft production, or for farming a bit of land. The word is not strictly suitable to a collective farm, whose organisation differs in various respects from the typical artel of pre-Revolutionary date.
- Barstchina.* Compulsory labour performed by serfs for their masters, not only on the land but in handicrafts and even in factories.
- Batrak.* A drudge, hireling ; a casual agricultural labourer.
- Brigade.* Term applied to a working party or gang under a brigadier, corresponding more or less to a foreman. Farm brigades may contain as many as a hundred workers and large brigades are subdivided into *svena* (*q.v.*).
- Dessiatina.* The Russian measure of land surface, equal approximately to 2·7 acres. Nowadays the metrical hectare is more commonly used.
- Dvor.* Court, yard, courtyard. Applied (1) to the Court of the Tsar, (2) to the courtyard of a house, or (3) to a peasant homestead, and, by implication, to the peasants living together in one homestead.
- Dvorianin* (pl. *dvoriane*). A courtier, nobleman, member of the aristocratic class.
- Hutor.* A freehold enclosed peasant farm on which the owner actually lived. See *otrub*.
- Kholop.* A slave as distinct from a serf. Originally enslaved prisoners of war or purchased slaves, usually employed in a nobleman's household, but sometimes on the land.
- Kolhoz.* From Kollektivnoe Hozyaistvo, collective economic enterprise : usually connotes a collective farm, but sometimes applied to other collective enterprises such as associations of fishers, fur hunters, etc.
- Kolhoznik.* Collectivised peasant ; member of a collective farm.
- Kopek.* The hundredth part of a rouble (*q.v.*).
- Krepostnoe pravo.* Serf-right, the institution of serfdom.
- Krestianin* (pl. *krestiane*). Peasant, a member of the peasant class or order.
- Kulak.* Lit. a fist. Originally applied to a grasping and profiteering peasant lending money, goods or implements

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to his poorer neighbours at high interest rates. By the Bolsheviks applied to any industrious and prosperous peasant.

*Kustar* (adj. *kustarny*). From *kust*, a bush. A handicraft or cottage worker working with primitive tools and appliances. Cf. English "hedge carpenter".

*Lapoti* (pl. *lapti*). Bast sandals made by *kustari* usually from the inner bark of the birch and worn by the poorer peasants.

*M.T.S.* Machine-Tractor Station, a State organisation for supplying tractors, combine harvesters and some other types of power-driven machinery to the surrounding kolhozy. On an average a machine-tractor station serves some 25 or 30 kolhozy.

*Mir*. Lit. world, universe; also applied to the peasant commune.

*Moujik*. Lit. a little man. A term formerly applied to a man of the lower and labouring class, usually but not exclusively to peasants.

*N.E.P.* The New Economic Policy, under which a considerable amount of private commercial enterprise was tolerated; was inaugurated in March 1921 and lasted more or less until the First Five-Year Plan began in October 1928.

*Nadiel*. Lit. a share or portion. The land allotted to the peasant communes at the emancipation.

*Narodnik*. From *narod*, the people. A term applied to a liberal society of educated persons formed about 1870 to bring education and culture to the peasants. Owing to Government opposition the *narodniki* were compelled to work by stealth and subsequently developed revolutionary tendencies.

*Oblzo*. Oblastnoe Zemelnoe Otdelenie, Provincial Agricultural Department.

*Obrok*. (1) Rent in kind, usually a portion of the crop, paid by serfs for the use of their masters' land. (2) A money payment to his master by a serf for the right to engage in trade or work for a third party in return for wages.

*Othozhy promysel*. Lit. retired or separated industry. Term applied to work in industry undertaken by pre-War peasants and present-day kolhozniki to supplement their earnings from the land.

*Otovarivanie*. More or less a settlement by payment in kind. As applied to sales of produce by peasants to State enterprises the system differed from barter in that the buyer

## Glossary

did not actually supply goods in exchange for produce but paid for the latter in money, at the same time undertaking to give the peasant seller the opportunity to buy manufactured goods with the money thus earned.

*Otrub.* A freehold peasant farm consisting of two or more separate bits of land, the owner living in the village and not on his own land. See *hutor*.

*Pogrom.* Lit. devastation, destruction, pillage. Any popular disturbance with violence, but chiefly applied to the violent anti-Jewish outbreaks during the latter years of the Tsarist régime.

*Politodel.* Politicheski Otdel. Political section, generally consisted of three members attached to railway depôts, State farms, M.T.S., to ginger up the workers and see that no schismatic political tendencies develop.

*Pomestchik.* Originally the holder of a *pomestie*, *q.v.* Later any landed proprietor.

*Pomestie.* Originally an estate granted by the early princes to their vassals in return for service, usually military, to be held for life or during the period of service only. Later, loosely applied to any landed property excluding peasant land.

*Pud.* Russian standard of weight consisting of 40 Russian pounds, approximately equal to 36 lb. avoirdupois, or 16.38 kilograms. Under the Soviet régime the metric system is in general use.

*Rayon.* A Soviet territorial division. In cities more or less equivalent to a ward, in rural districts to the German *Kreis* rather than to the English county. See *volost*.

*Rayzo.* Rayonoe Zemelnoe Otdelenie — district agricultural department, the section of the district local Government board dealing with agricultural matters.

*Rouble.* Monetary unit. Before the War the exchange value of the rouble was about 2s. 1d. : the Soviet rouble at the present time has an official exchange value of about 9d. but a purchasing power of about 2½d.

*R.S.F.S.R.* Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic. Russia proper, including Siberia. The R.S.F.S.R. covers about 93 per cent of the total area of the U.S.S.R. and contains about 68 per cent of the total population.

*Samogonka.* Self-distilled, *i.e.* home-distilled and emphatically illicit alcohol.

*Sel'po.* Selski Potrebitelny Obshchestvo, village consumers' co-operative society.

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- Smychka*. Joining or fitting together. By Lenin used to connote the interdependence and mutual reliance of town and country.
- Sovhoz*. From *Sovetskoe Hozyaistvo*, Soviet or State economic enterprise. Used exclusively in connection with State agricultural enterprises, *i.e.* State farms.
- Stakhanovetz*. From Stakhanov the name of a coal-miner who in September 1935 astonished the Soviet Union by hewing an incredible quantity of coal in one shift. His secret was the better rationalisation and organisation of labour. This principle was adopted, *mutatis mutandis*, by other industries and in agriculture, and every worker who succeeds in this way in producing or performing so much more than the average output receives the title of Stakhanovetz and the privileges attaching thereto.
- Starosta*. From *starost*, old age. The elder or headman of a village or *mir*. Sometimes applied to an estate bailiff or overseer.
- Sveno*. Lit. a link, the smallest labour unit in a *kolhoz*, a subdivision of a brigade.
- Svenovod*. The leader of a *sveno*, a sub-foreman.
- Tovarishchestvo*. From *tovarishch*, a comrade, partner; hence a company or association.
- Tsentrosoyus*. The central organisation of the consumers' co-operative system.
- Ukaz*. An imperial edict or decree, now applied to an order or instruction issued by a Government department.
- Ulozhenie*. A statute, law or code. Now obsolete.
- Volost*. In Tsarist Russia a rural district comprising a number of villages. The affairs of the *volost* were managed by a council consisting exclusively of peasant delegates from the constituent villages. The Soviet *rayon* is the modern version of the *volost*.
- Zakoupka*. Purchase, the State's purchases of grain in addition to compulsory deliveries.
- Zemstvo*. Originally a local or cantonal council created by Peter I to help in the task of local government. The Zemstvo as a local self-Government institution was created in 1864. Delegates to the Zemstvo were of three classes, representing individual landowners, village communities and urban population. Their functions included the administration and control of education, health services, etc., as well as affording practical assistance to the peasants.

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